

Hafa Adai!

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Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXX, Issue No. 65

www.saipantribune.com

THURSDAY APRIL 2, 2020

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PIC ID'd as possible quarantine site

By **KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA**
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Pacific Islands Club Saipan has been identified as a new possible quarantine site to hold individuals who are considered "person under investigation" for COVID-19.

According to Gloria Cavanagh, PIC Saipan general manager, the CNMI Government reached out to the Micronesia Resort Inc., the mother company of PIC and Kensington Hotel Saipan, to request that their facilities be used as an additional quarantine site.

See PIC on **Page 4**

Pacific Islands Club Saipan has been closed off in preparation for quarantining individuals experiencing COVID-19-like symptoms.

KIMBERLY BAUTISTA

4 new COVID-19 cases in NMI

By **KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA**
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Test results on the 70-year-old man who died last Monday at the Kanoa Resort quarantine site came back positive for COVID-19 yesterday, together with the test results that confirm three new COVID-19 cases in the CNMI.

» 70-year-old man was first COVID-19 death in CNMI

Press secretary Kevin Bautista confirmed that the male individual died of COVID-19 complications and is officially the first COVID-19 related

See 4 NEW on **Page 4**

'Game over!'—for now

» Gaming establishments are shuttered

By **IVA MAURIN**
iva_maurin@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres or-

dered yesterday the closure of the casino, video poker establishments, e-gaming facilities, and all other businesses en-

gaged in gaming, in an effort to stop the rise of COVID-19 cases in the CNMI.

Torres amended Directive 14 of his Second Amended Executive Order 2020-04 to promote social distancing and

See GAME on **Page 4**

Star Marianas suspends flights

» Emergency flight services still OK

» Air cargo between CNMI and Guam unaffected

By **IVA MAURIN and FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
iva_maurin@saipantribune.com
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTERS

Star Marianas Air, Inc. is temporarily suspending its interisland flight services beginning Friday, April 3, but cargo and medical evacuation flights will continue.

According to Star Marianas president Shaun Christian in a statement, they will temporarily suspend their scheduled flight services between the islands until such time that

the provision of scheduled services becomes helpful to serving those communities.

This was in response to a request from Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, and Rota and Tinian mayors Efraim M. Atalig and Edwin P. Aldan for the interisland passenger flights to be suspended to help control the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

"Star [Marianas] will continue to provide 24-hour emergency flight services for patient transfers and other transportation needs to

See STAR on **Page 4**



King-Hinds

INSIDE



BUSINESS

The coronavirus has dealt a financial blow to millions of Americans and now April's bills are due.

PAGE 11



NATION

The White House projects there could be 100,000 to 240,000 deaths in the U.S. from coronavirus.

PAGE 12



WORLD

French nursing homes are fast running out of body bags for the increasing number of deaths.

PAGE 14



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Local

‘Open businesses are providing a great public service’

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

In just a matter of weeks, the COVID-19 pandemic has created a new normal for the CNMI and the rest of the world in how we live, socialize, study, and work. One of the factors that still gives everyone a sense of normalcy is that some goods and services are still available.

Many businesses in the CNMI have temporarily bowed out of operations one by one, as the COVID-19 situation worsened. But not all businesses. Many are still open with limited hours to provide fuel for cars, delivery of hot food and fresh vegetables and fruits, groceries and water, and even medicine, and Saipan Chamber of Commerce

president Velma Palacios believes these businesses are providing a great public service right now.

“Within a span of two days, our community and businesses are forced to adapt to our new normal. With the announcement of positive cases of COVID-19 on Saipan and with the rising numbers of confirmed cases...I am grateful

for the businesses that have remained open to provide critical services to our community,” she said.

“As a business owner and executive, it is difficult to decide whether to keep the doors open or close during this chaos. These business managers have to provide for the health and safety of stakeholders, which involves constant worry and

strict precautionary measures for the safety and welfare for themselves, their employees, and their customers. These overwhelming risks may tip businesses into wanting to close their doors but, at the same time, we as a community ask many businesses to stay open to provide essential services,” Palacios added.

She said that most businesses are losing money but understand their role in providing critical products and services for families during these difficult times. “Many of their employees would have better peace of mind if they were able to self-quarantine and work from home. But not everyone is fortunate to do so, as keeping the business operational for at least some hours provides for our collective livelihoods.”

“We thank these businesses and their employees who continue to provide services to the community and ensure their customers are safe,” she said.

These include businesses such as gas stations, banks, grocery stores, utilities, communications, health care providers, auto-repair, laundromats, water delivery, and many vendors, which Palacios said are all critical to the livelihood of our islands.

AC Pacific LLC president Alex B.K. Youn, who manages I Love Saipan stores and Star Sands Plaza, said that aside from the tourists, providing for the local community is always an important factor in their business portfolio.

“We have an outlet store on Middle Road for the lo-



Palacios

cal market and we are expanding our product lines and offering more discounted products on the packaged food products. ... Our business is not making enough sales to meet the

breakeven point but we have the three stores open because we have to keep our employees in the payroll and at the same time give service to the community,” he said.

“As we have the health and safety of the CNMI community in mind, our purchasing team has been sourcing out since early February and getting in masks and many products that are needed for the COVID-19 situation,” he added.

For their part, Palacios said that the Saipan Chamber of Commerce is trying to adapt to the new landscape by pushing out as much information as they can. “We want to keep businesses informed as more resources and information become available. We are working collaboratively with our CNMI government partners as processes are made in relations to the newly passed

U.S. stimulus package and as we get more information, we will share more information.”

“This is a difficult time for everyone, not only in our community but globally. We ask

for everyone’s cooperation in following the directives and guidelines issued by the COVID-19 Task Force, which is operating in our collective best interest. We are in this together, and, most importantly, we want everyone to remain safe and healthy,” she added.

Youn remains optimistic about the plight of the CNMI business community. “We’re trying our best to help the business community survive through this, whether they are open or not. I believe that tourism will rebound in the near future and businesses should make a long-term survival plan and get ready for the bright future ahead,” he said.

To stay updated with the CNMI business community, check www.saipan-chamber.com/coronavirus-resource-page.

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Finance provides guide on ‘stimulus checks’

On March 27, 2020, President Donald J. Trump signed into law the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act. The CARES Act includes provision for a refundable tax credit, widely known as a “stimulus check” that applies to the CNMI and other U.S. territories.

“This relief comes at a much-needed time, and I thank President Trump and the U.S. Congress for their work in taking care of the country, particularly their support of the CNMI, one of the hardest hit American communities as a result of the global outbreak of COVID-19,” said Gov. Ralph DLG Torres.

“I would like to thank the team at the Division of Revenue & Taxation for working tirelessly in making sure our taxpayers get the federal stimulus we all need and can use.

I know this would assist every family in the Commonwealth and is great news especially as we weather this economic downturn due to the Covid-19 Pandemic,” said Finance Secretary David DLG Atalig.

The refundable credit provides up to \$1,200 or \$2,400 for joint returns for eligible individuals, and \$500 additional for each qualifying child.

Any individual is eligible for this refundable credit. This generally includes legally employed workers who reside and work in the CNMI, such as green card holders and those on work visas, such as a CW, H-1B, or H-2A.

To benefit immediately from this stimulus, you must have at least filed an income tax return for 2018. We encourage all residents with income, earned or unearned,

to file a tax return; especially pensioners and other individuals that typically do not have a filing requirement (income amounts equal to or less than the standard deduction amount allowed).

The Department of Finance, Division of Revenue & Taxation is developing the best methodology to maximize the amount of stimulus funds to be requested by the CNMI for advance payment to taxpayers.

Taxpayers who have not yet filed their 2019 returns, will be substituted with their 2018 return information.

Stimulus checks will be issued via direct deposit or by check and mailed to the address indicated on the return, or last known address. Taxpayers will not be contacted to provide bank account information. The Department of Finance will provide addi-

tional public guidance before disbursement.

Income tax deadline

The CNMI, as a mirror U.S. income tax code jurisdiction, will adopt the income tax filing extension deadlines announced by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service from April 15 to July 15, 2020. This extension applies to all individual returns, trusts and corporations. This extension is automatic. Taxpayers do not need to file any form to obtain the extension.

Although the filing deadline is now July 15, we encourage those taxpayers that are eligible for additional child tax credit (ACTC) to file as early as possible so that their ACTC refund can be processed early and their refund check, if any, be received sooner.

To assist taxpayers in social distancing efforts, the Division of Revenue & Taxation is providing a tax return dropbox at the entrance of the office for easy and fast submission of tax forms.

Taxpayers are encouraged to visit the Department of Finance website at www.dof.gov.mp/forms to access digital versions of the required tax forms. If you have any questions or concerns, you may send an email to info@dof.gov.mp and a response will be sent as soon as possible. (PR)

Tax Filing Status:	Refundable Credit	Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) Threshold**
Single/Married Filing Separate/Qualifying Widow	\$1,200.00	\$75,000.00
Head of Household	\$1,200.00	\$112,500.00
Married Filing Joint	\$2,400.00	\$150,000.00
Each Qualifying Child	\$ 500.00	
“Qualifying Child” means a qualifying child of the taxpayer (as defined in section 152(c)) who has not attained age 17.		
**The amount of the refundable credit will be reduced by 5% of the amount exceeding the AGI threshold.		

Should you wear mask in public if not sick with coronavirus?

By LAURAN NEERGAARD
AP MEDICAL WRITER

WASHINGTON (AP)—If you’re not sick with the new coronavirus, should you wear a mask in public? Global health authorities say no. Amid a shortage of masks, the U.S. is sticking with that advice but Tuesday, President Donald Trump suggested people who are worried wear a scarf.

That shortage is so severe that the Joint Commission, which accredits U.S. hospitals, said Tuesday that if facilities can’t provide proper masks, health workers are allowed to bring their own from home.

Front-line health workers have the greatest need for masks. And when people are sick, wearing a mask helps lessen the chances of infecting others. In places where relatives care for the sick at home, the World Health Organization also has recommended they wear a mask.

But “there is no specific evidence to suggest that the wearing of masks by the mass population has any particular benefit,” Dr. Mike Ryan, the WHO’s epidemics chief, told reporters Monday.

“In fact, there’s some evi-

dence to suggest the opposite,” he added, noting risks from an improperly fitted mask or touching the face while taking it off or putting it on.

For months as the COVID-19 crisis grew and masks disappeared from store shelves, U.S. health officials have agreed. The virus is believed to spread mostly through droplets from coughs or sneezes, and thus the main advice has been to keep your distance—staying 6 feet away—in addition to frequent hand-washing and not touching your face. Health workers who may be doing procedures that generate tinier particles are supposed to get high priority for tight-fitting filtering masks.

“Seriously people - STOP BUYING MASKS!” Surgeon General Jerome Adams wrote in a February 29 tweet. “They are not effective in preventing general public from catching #Coronavirus but if healthcare providers can’t get them to care for sick patients, it puts them and our communities at risk.”

But mask-wearing has long been common in some countries during respiratory outbreaks, especially in parts of

Asia. As questions grow about whether people sometimes can spread the virus before realizing they’re sick -- which social distancing is supposed to address—increasingly people ask what it would hurt to wear some form of mask in public.

Trump said Tuesday that his scientific advisers made clear the general public shouldn’t be competing with hospitals and health workers for scarce masks of any type.

His solution: “Use a scarf if you want,” Trump said at the daily White House briefing. “It doesn’t have to be a mask. It’s not a bad idea at least for a period of time.”

Earlier in the day, Dr. Anthony Fauci, infectious disease chief at the U.S. National Institutes of Health, had told CNN that once there are enough masks, there might be “some very serious consideration” about broadening the mask recommendations.

For now, the advice posted on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s website: “If you are NOT sick: You do not need to wear a face mask unless you are caring for someone who is sick (and they are not able to wear a face mask).”

COVID-19 REFUNDABLE TAX CREDIT

"STIMULUS CHECK"

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

President Trump signed the CARES Act, bipartisan legislation that provides tax-free payments to give individuals and families the relief they need, including residents of the Marianas.

Governor Torres and the nation's governors worked with the White House and Congress on this relief package.

How much will you get?

- Individuals earning up to \$75,000 will receive **\$1,200.**
- Couples earning up to \$150,000 will receive **\$2,400.**
- For every child in the household, you will receive **\$500.**
- If you made more than \$75,000, your payment will be reduced by \$5 for every \$100 of income that exceeds the limits. (Ex. If you made \$80,000 in 2019, you will receive \$950.)
- The payment decreases to zero for an individual making \$99,000 or more or a couple making \$198,000 or more.

How will the money be sent?

- Stimulus checks will be issued via direct deposit or by check and mailed to the address indicated on the return, or last known address. Taxpayers will not be contacted to provide bank account information. The Department of Finance will provide additional public guidance before disbursement.

I'm on Social Security, or don't make enough to file a tax return. Will I get a check?

- Yes. Even if you didn't file a tax return for 2018 or 2019 or pay taxes in those years, you will be eligible if you received a Form SSA-1099 for the year 2019.

I'm a college student. Do I get a check?


- If you've been working and filing taxes independently in recent years, you may qualify. If your parents claim you as a dependent on their taxes, you're ineligible.

I'm behind on child support payments. Does that affect me?


- Yes, the IRS may reduce the amount you receive if you have past due child support payments that have been reported to the Treasury Department.

I'm not an American citizen. Do I qualify?

- Yes, as long as you're living and working in the U.S. with a valid Social Security number. That includes green card holders, and it generally includes those on work visas, such as a CW, H-1B, or H-2A.
- But it generally excludes visitors and people who are in the U.S. illegally.



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION
GOVERNOR'S COVID-19 TASK FORCE



Finance calls for tax reform

By IVA MAURIN
iva_maurin@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Department of Finance is recommending a tax reform, on top of its suggested cost-containment measures, following its report of only about \$21 million remaining for the CNMI government to use for the rest of the fiscal year.

“The tax system of the Commonwealth should be updated,” Finance Secretary David Atalig stated in the report.

Atalig added that the tax code of the CNMI is antiquated and fails to parallel with the increased cost of government services. “Albeit developed with the intention to attract investment of large conglomerates, combined with abatement programs and incentives, the current structure has not fared well for the CNMI.”

The proposed tax reforms recommendations include the suspension of the Education Tax Credit that is applied to

income taxes, the leasehold levy on commercial properties under a foreign leasee, and the development of a tax on remittances, for exports of money that would otherwise circulate throughout the domestic economy.

The CNMI’s economy, as with the rest of the world, is being hit by the lack of tourists as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The cessation of some tourism-related businesses, particularly hotels, has resulted in furloughed employees, and with it comes less buying power to help regenerate the local economy.

Atalig, in his report, said that tourism at a standstill will result in unprecedented reductions in tax collections and other revenue-generating activities in government operations and services, thus the department’s projection of a 48% decrease in the fiscal year 2020 budget.

“The Department of Fi-

nance realizes that the numbers represent a bleak situation. We fully understand that these figures, as they fall, represent more than that. They represent worry among families in our community, they show opportunity slipping away for a recent graduate or from those who wish to thrive at home,” the report reads.

“We recognize that these projections are not just numbers, but shed light on the concerns of our people, especially those most vulnerable. However, these numbers can change. We are committed to seeing this hardship through so that these figures represent resilience, that once again we see and feel hope throughout our islands,” it adds.

As cost-containment measures, the Department of Finance has suggested, among others, the consolidation and restructuring of government departments, reduction in work hours, prioritization of federally-funded programs, and utilities conservation.



PRE-SCREENING CHECK

The Commonwealth Health Center in Garapan has set up a pre-screening check at the hospital's main door, to screen people before they enter the building as a means to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus in the CNMI.

KRIZEL TUAZON

PIC

From Page 1

Cavanagh said that no contract has been signed yet as of yesterday and nothing has been finalized.

Cavanagh said MRI is set to decide on the CNMI government's request today.

Cavanagh added that PIC has already been closed and prepared in the event MRI decides to accept the request to turn the facility into a quarantine site.

The current quarantine sites in the CNMI for COVID-19 PUIs and confirmed cases are Kanoa Resort and Mariana Resort & Spa. The

Century Hotel in Garapan was also used as a quarantine site early in March to isolate incoming travelers from areas that have COVID-19 positive cases.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, the CNMI COVID-19 Task Force has been arranging for temporary isolation facilities for travelers, through the business community, since mid-March, to protect the limited resources of the Commonwealth Health Center, as well as to not compromise its essential operations.

In a Joint Information Center statement issued by the CNMI's COVID-19 Task Force, CHCC continues to work with the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force to expand

designated isolation areas to closely monitor the wellbeing of individuals with symptoms.

As of yesterday, the CNMI has submitted 31 specimens for COVID-19 testing to the Guam Public Health Laboratory. Of the 31 specimens, 19 have been processed, resulting in six positive cases and 13 negative cases. CHC awaits the results of 12 specimens.

The four new cases include the 70-year-old male who passed away on March 30, and three females, ages 14, 60, and 77 years old.

The CNMI currently has six confirmed cases, two male and three female, and one COVID-19 related death.

4 NEW

From Page 1

death in the Commonwealth.

On top of the two confirmed COVID-19 cases in the CNMI, the new test results show that there are now six positive cases in the CNMI and one death.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, and the Commonwealth Health Care Corp. announced the confirmation of three other new COVID-19 cases in the CNMI. They said four new positives, but that count includes the man who died Monday.

The three new cases are all females, ages 14, 60, and 77.

CHCC said it has already initiated contact tracing for the most immediate contacts of these three patients, like close family members, friends, and work associates.

As of yesterday, the CNMI has submitted a total of 31 specimens for

COVID-19 testing to the Guam Public Health Laboratory. Of those 31 specimens, 19 have been processed, resulting in six positive cases and 13 negative cases. CHCC awaits the results of 12 specimens.

Some of the cases came in contact with those who have a travel history from a location with confirmed COVID-19 cases. Other cases have had no travel history or no evident indication of coming in contact with someone who is positive for COVID-19.

This new finding of cases occurring among those without close contact is being looked at as suggestive that COVID-19 community transmission is already occurring on Saipan. Community transmission means people may have been infected within the community and not just imported from another COVID-19 outbreak jurisdiction.

COVID-19 updates in Guam

Guam saw its third COVID-19 relat-

ed death yesterday at the Guam Memorial Hospital, an 81-year-old with underlying health issue.

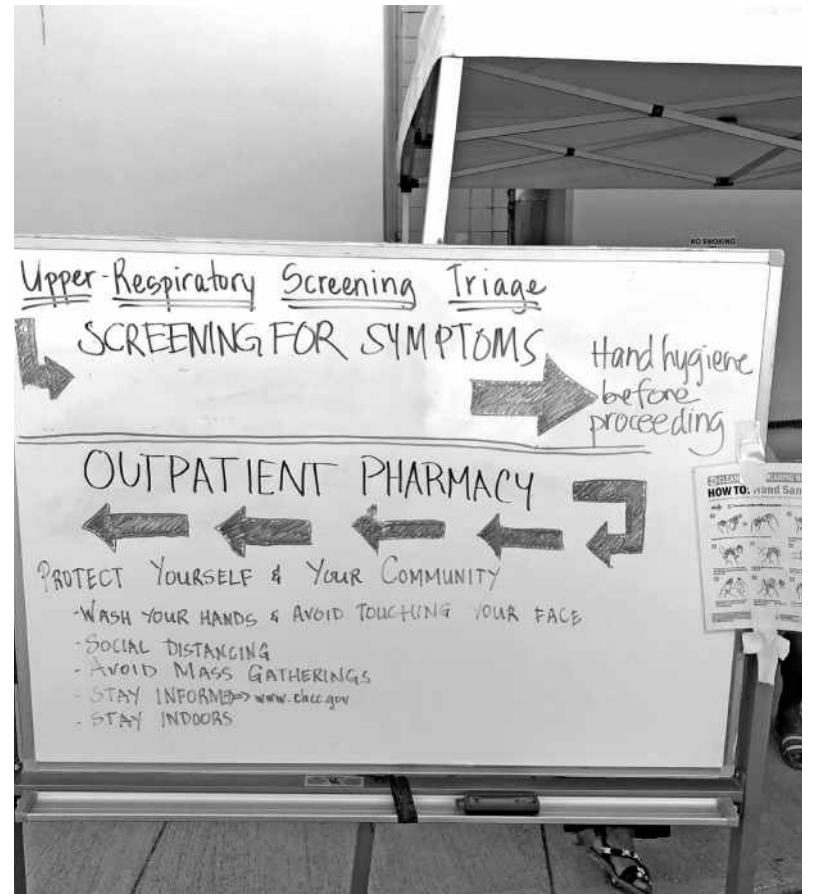
The patient had no recent travel history but initial investigations indicate the patient may have contracted COVID-19 from community contact.

The Guam Department of Public Health and Social Services tested 28 individuals for COVID-19 last Tuesday; nine tested positive and 19 tested negative.

The DPHSS overall count also includes four positive cases that were tested by the Naval Health Research Center in San Diego.

Currently, Guam has 69 confirmed cases, 35 are male and 34 are female. Three have died, seven have recovered, and 59 remain in isolation.

Of the 69 confirmed cases in Guam, one is in their 90s, three are in their 80s, six are in their 70s, 21 are in their 60s, 13 are in their 50s, 11 are in their 40s, eight are in their 30s and six are in their 20s.



GAME

From Page 1

prevent spread of COVID-19, following the Commonwealth Health Care Corp.'s recommendation to close all businesses engaged in gaming, including the casino, video poker establishments, and e-gaming facilities.

"CHCC states that CNMI residents frequenting these establishments, often for long duration, are at significant risk of being exposed to persons who may be infected with COVID-19," Torres stated. "CHCC further states that given confirmation of community transmission [on] Saipan, continued access to these establishments would jeopardize the health and wellbeing of our residents. For these stated

reasons, I will direct the closure of the casino and all video poker establishments and e-gaming facilities throughout the CNMI."

Additionally, all businesses engaged in recreational or amusement type activities are also ordered closed. These include the roller-skate rink, businesses with child play facilities, and arcades.

The governor said that, like gaming establishments, CNMI residents, mainly children, frequent these recreational facilities for long duration, and often get in close contact or near close contact with other persons.

"Persons are also in contact with surfaces that may have been infected by COVID-19. Therefore, persons who go to these locations are at a significant risk of being exposed to persons who may be infected with COVID-19," he said.

STAR

From Page 1

support control efforts in the fight against the COVID-19 virus. Star [Marianas] will also continue to provide interisland air cargo services between the islands in the CNMI and Guam," Christian said.

Commonwealth Ports Authority board chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds described Star Marianas Air's decision as a "clear indication" of the recognition of the seriousness of this situation and how critical it is for everyone in the CNMI, public and private, to do their part to stop the spread of COVID-19.

Christian said that CHCC has been so successful at persuading the public to stay home that it has "resulted in the demand for interisland travel to fall to near zero." He said they will provide updated information about the flight suspension to the public from time to time as conditions evolve.

Christian assured that additional service will be provided, as needed, to continue to support Rota's needs for transportation as conditions improve.

King-Hinds said Tinian and Rota are highly vulnerable communities, given the limited capabilities of their health clinics.

"Preventing and containing the spread of COVID-19 is all of our business and I thank Star Marianas Air for making the right choice and doing their part," King-Hinds said.

Star Marianas Air earlier suspended all passenger flights between Guam and Rota, when the quarantine requirement for passengers entering the CNMI was put in effect.

Atalig has also made an urgent request to the governor to close all ports of entry for passenger travel into Rota.

United Airlines earlier granted Torres' request to suspend all its flights into and out of the CNMI from Guam. United will suspend flights from April 6 to 30, 2020.

CPA notified the public Tuesday that the last United Airlines' flight into and out of the CNMI from Guam will be this Sunday, April 5.

Skymark Airlines Inc.'s last flights between Saipan and Japan were last March 25, temporarily closing the CNMI's door to international flights. The suspension of the flights will be until May 10, 2020.

Kilili veterans bill added to House-OK'd coronavirus act

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Veterans in a vocational rehabilitation and education program would be protected, if their school is unable to transition to online learning during the coronavirus, under terms of legislation introduced by Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) and passed by the U.S. House of Representatives yesterday.

Sablan's bill was added to the Student Veteran Coronavirus Response Act of 2020, a bill with multiple provisions to help veterans keep their benefits intact if the coronavirus pandemic disrupts their education.

"We cannot let any student veterans lose their work-study payments, have their housing cut off, exhaust their disaster housing stipend continuation payments, or lose their benefits due to school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic," said House Veterans Affairs Committee chair Rep. Mark Takano (D-Calif.).

Takano's Republican counterpart on the committee,

Ranking Member Phil Roe, M.D. of Tennessee, recalled his own experience using veterans benefits after his military service. "I know firsthand how important the G.I. Bill is since I relied on it to put food on the table for my family after I got out of the Army," Roe said. "With so many veterans struggling because of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has never been more important than it is now to make sure the G.I. Bill is there for them, just like it was there for me."

Sablan's bill, H.R. 6262, is also bipartisan. Republican Rep. Michael Bost joined Sablan in introducing the measure, which amends Title 38 of the U.S. Code to restore entitlement to rehabilitation programs for veterans affected by school closures or disapprovals.

"My bill allows the Veterans Administration to keep paying for a veteran's housing



Sablan

and providing a subsistence allowance through the end of the term, in the event the school the vet is attending closes suddenly or terminates a program of study," Sablan said.

Sablan's bill also prevents veterans from losing eligibility time for education support, when they do not receive credit for classes taken. And it provides two additional months of subsistence allowance to veterans currently participating in the vocational rehabilitation and education, or VR&E, program, who may face difficulty finding a job as a result of COVID-19's impact on near-term employment prospects.

In addition, the Student Veteran Coronavirus Response Act, H.R. 6322, recognizes that not every student veteran will be able to make the transition to online learning, if their school is forced to use that system during the coronavirus crisis. Veterans in that

situation could also continue to receive a housing allowance. The bill, as passed by the House yesterday, also allows the VA to continue paying student veterans on work-study, even if they lose their on-campus job due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Even as the pandemic has limited the ability of congressional committees to hold physical hearings and limited regular activity on the floor of the House of Representatives, the Veterans Affairs Committee, of which Sablan is a member, has continued its own work to lessen the

impact of the virus on veterans, whether they are students or seeking medical care.

For more information about the committee's efforts to address the COVID-19 crisis and resources for available for veterans, visit: <https://veterans.house.gov/covid-19>. (PR)

Manglona: Escalate COVID-19 testing

By IVA MAURIN
iva_maurin@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Testing should be escalated to include as many individuals that may have come in contact with the confirmed six COVID-19 positive cases in the CNMI. According to Sen. Paul A. Manglona (Ind-Rota), this is the only way to know how many asymptomatic carriers are there on the islands.

In his letter to Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, the senator also said that while it is a must to do contact tracing and strictly follow the directives, the key to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is by breaking its chain of transmission and, for this to be done effectively, "we must test and isolate."

"The COVID-19 Task Force should seriously consider expanding the testing criteria so that an individual who does not necessarily meet the COVID-19 'person under investigation' criteria or the surveillance case definition, but was potentially exposed to positively-tested individuals, could be tested," he said.

The senator identified instances of individuals not meeting the PUI or surveillance case definition for testing, but could be tested, such as CNMI residents who are on contact tracing listing who

do not exhibit severe symptoms, and patients of private clinics who exhibit mild to moderate symptoms of COVID-19 and are recommended by their physician for testing. Any testing has to go through



Manglona

and be approved by the Commonwealth Health Care Corp.

Residents who do not exhibit symptoms but have received communication from the U.S. mainland or elsewhere informing them of possible exposure to an infected individual there; and airline pilots who come to Saipan, Tinian, or Rota regularly either on cargo or passenger flights who do not show symptoms of COVID-19 could also be tested.

"While I agree that we must take a comprehensive approach—contact tracing of infections, social distancing, public efforts to increase awareness of hand sanitation, voluntary self-quarantine measures, strict measures at health institutions, and the likes—we all know the most effective way to prevent infections and save lives is breaking the chain of transmission," he added.

Expand CNMI's testing ability

"We need to expand our test-

ing ability. We may expeditiously do this if we procure test kits with local CNMI funds," Manglona said.

The senator asked the governor to take immediate action and procure test kits

proven to give accurate results from outside the U.S. mainland, adding that, according to President Donald J. Trump, equipment procured from foreign jurisdictions that are necessary to combat COVID-19 are federally reimbursable.

"Again, we cannot be certain as to who are carriers of this virus. Aside from social distancing, we need to be vigilant in our testing and administer tests liberally when it comes to possible exposure," he said. "This has been proven to be very effective in places like Great Britain, South Korea, and Iceland that have a robust diagnostic capability. It is for this reason, governor, that I cannot overemphasize the need for more test kits right now, even if it means buying the test kits and personal protective equipment using our own local funds."

The CNMI is expecting testing kits and equipment from the U.S. mainland this month.

Woman sues Mango Resort over alleged injuries in fall

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A woman is suing the owner of Mango Resort in As Perdido over the alleged injuries she suffered when she slipped and fell near the front desk building of the resort last Feb. 7.

Linda A. Fital, through counsel Matthew J. Holley, asked the Superior Court to hold Blue Lagoon Realty Inc. liable for negligence and pay her damages in an amount to be proven at trial.

Fital asked for a jury trial in case the mandatory mediation is unsuccessful.

As of press time yesterday, *Saipan Tribune* was still try-

ing to get comments from Blue Lagoon Realty.

According to Holley in the complaint, Fital, who was a guest of Mango Resort, was going down the steps at the front desk building when she slipped and fell. Holley said Fital sustained "serious" physical injuries but did not indicate the specific injuries, besides saying that the plaintiff was unaware that the step was slippery.

Holley said the defendant breached a duty to ensure that all customers are free from unreasonable risks of harm



Holley

when it failed to provide railing—posing a dangerous condition for persons such as Fital.

He said the defendant also failed, among other things, to ensure that the floor was reasonably safe for individuals to walk on, provide visible warnings or markings on the steps, and provide adequate warning signs of the dangerous condition.

Holley said as a result of the recklessness and negligence of defendant, Fital sustained injuries resulting in hospitalization, severe pain, and emotional and mental distress.



SOCIAL DISTANCING RULE

A customer enters the payment center of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. in Dandan Tuesday afternoon. CUC put up a tent outside the building, where customers wait their turn before going inside the payment center and customer's service. CUC's social distancing policy and limited hours due to coronavirus caused a long line of customers early last week.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Manglona grants IPI request to seal two exhibits in former workers' suit

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona approved Tuesday the request of Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC to file under seal two of the four exhibits filed by their counsel in connection with a lawsuit filed by seven former workers against IPI and its contractor and subcontractor.

Manglona ordered that the two exhibits in Kelley Butcher's declaration last Monday, March 30, shall be kept under seal.

IPI has submitted a declaration from Butcher in support of IPI's opposition to the former workers' second motion to sanction IPI.

Manglona said Butcher refers to four exhibits in her declaration, two of which are provided in support of her statement that she was and is required to travel to the U.S.

mainland in order to assist a family member with serious medical conditions.

IPI has requested that the court maintain the two exhibits under seal as they contain personally identifiable, confidential, and potentially embarrassing medical information regarding a non-party to this lawsuit.

IPI said the public's interest in viewing the information would be minimal, if not non-existent and that the seal should be maintained throughout the pendency of the lawsuit.

The judge said IPI has indicated that it is providing copies of these exhibits to the former workers' counsel for their review in an unredacted format via email.

Last month, IPI hired former NMI Bar president Sean E. Frink and Catherine J. Cachero as its counsel in this case.



Manglona

Frink and Cachero said Butcher will continue to be involved in this case.

The plaintiffs—Tianming Wang, Dong Han, Yongjun Meng, Liangcai Sun, Youli Wang, Quingcun Xu, and Xiyang

Du—are suing IPI, MCC International Saipan Ltd. Co. and MCC's subcontractor Gold Mantis Construction Decoration (CNMI) LLC over the alleged injuries they suffered during accidents at the worksite of IPI's resort/casino project in Garapan. The plaintiffs are all Chinese nationals.

Their counsels are Saipan lawyer Bruce Berline and New York-based attorney Aaron Halegua.

In its response to the lawsuit, IPI said any wage claims by the plaintiffs are barred because they voluntarily illegally entered the CNMI to work.

Guam Guard helps prepare isolation site

The Guam National Guard's 94th Civil Support Team helped various government of Guam agencies prepare a new

isolation site by setting up and certifying the decontamination location and training staff on proper procedures.

The mission of the 94th CST is to assess hazards, advise civil authorities and facility military support during

emergencies and incidents of suspected weapons of mass destruction or other disasters. And, at this time of crisis, the



Soldiers and airmen, from the Guam National Guard 94th Civil Support Team, prepare a new isolation site by setting up and certifying the decontamination location and training staff on proper procedures.

GUAM NATIONAL GUARD

94th CST is using the expertise of its personnel to help the people of Guam ensure they perform the mission, conduct proper decontamination and get home safely to their families each day.

Throughout the month of March, before and during the COVID-19 pandemic on island, the 94th CST has worked with various government of Guam agencies and private business to train employees who may come

in contact with infected individuals.

Along with the 94th CST's support to the local community, a contingent of GUNG soldiers and airmen were placed on state active duty by direction of Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero. These service members are currently providing security support to the Guam Police Department at various isolation sites throughout the island. (PR)

Suspect in rob try arrested

On Sunday, March 22, 2020, at about 6:51am, the CNMI Department of Public Safety received a 911 call reporting an injured person at a poker establishment in the village of San Jose, Saipan.

At about 6:54am, police arrived on scene and came upon a woman lying on the floor of the cashier's booth, moaning in pain. When the officers asked her what had happened, she was unable to answer as she was in severe pain. The victim was brought to the Commonwealth Health Center where she was admitted.

Witnesses at the scene told police that a masked individual had attempted to gain entry into the cashier's booth before fleeing and heading south toward Oleai.

After further investigation, police learned that the suspect had told the cashier that he needed to "cash out." Shortly after the victim left the cashier's booth, she blacked out before police arrived on scene.

The suspect was de-

scribed as 5'6" or 5'7" tall, dark-complexioned, skinny, wearing a black long-sleeved shirt, a pair of tan-colored cargo shorts, black baseball cap, and a pair of black shoes.

Upon further investigation on March 26, 2020, witnesses from the scene were shown a photo line-up of similarly described individuals and a witness at the scene quickly identified Michael Jordan P. Cabrera as the suspect who ran out of the poker establishment at the time of the incident.

On March 27, 2020, Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho signed and issued an arrest warrant for Cabrera's arrest with bail set at \$50,000, for the charges of attempted robbery and assault and battery. On the same date, authorities arrested Cabrera within the village of Chalan Kanoa. Cabrera was transported to the Department of Corrections where he was booked and detained. (PR)



Cabrera

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

April 02, 1999

FCC funds sought for health care

The Northern Marianas has pressed the Federal Communications Commission to overhaul its Universal Service Rural Health Care Program in order to free up vital telecommunications funding intended for the local health care system. Due to declining cash resources, the Commonwealth hopes to avail of the funds granted under the Telecommunications Act implemented in 1996 which provides for the rural health care program. The health care program, through the Universal Service Program, is designed to support low-income insular areas in dealing with the high cost of telecommunications.

7 in prison chaos charged

The federal grand jury yesterday indicted seven prisoners on charges of hostage-taking during the recent prison siege on Saipan. In a press release, the court named William C. Sablan, Vicente Aldan Jr., Ryan Babauta, Arcel Basto, Jeffrey Celis, Edwin Blas and Sheldon Yano in a two-count indictment that alleges them as the group who took other inmates during the jail hostage drama. The seven also conspired to threaten, oppress, intimidate and physically assault other inmates in the CNMI Male Detention Center. Reportedly, Chinese nationals and a Filipino,

who were at the detention center together with these seven prisoners, were brutally beaten with fists and objects.

April 02, 2001

Harsher penalties vs child rights violators eyed

The CNMI government on Friday stressed the need to expedite approval of the proposed changes to the existing anti-child abuse law, in hopes to prevent the increasing cases of child rights violation in the Commonwealth. Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio underscored the need for immediate changes to the existing law Friday after he officially designated April as the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month. In an interview with reporters, the governor disclosed moves to give the existing law additional teeth in order to discourage people from committing crimes against the children. He said changes to the law should include stiffer penalties against child rights violators.

Continental looks at 8 new markets for CNMI

Continental Airlines is reviewing possible deployment of nonstop flights out of eight emerging markets primarily spurred by the slow recovery of the Japanese economy from deep financial upheavals. This, as Continental Airlines yesterday launched its Saipan-Nagoya direct flights with 155 passengers onboard including 10 individuals representing different media entities in Japan. Continental previously abandoned the route due to low demand from the Japanese tourism market. It has consistently said that deployment of flights depends heavily on market demand. Continental Micronesia Staff Vice President for Sales and Promotions Walter Dias said the resumption of direct flights mirrors the increasing de-

mand from the travel market in Japan, as well as the country's recovering economy.

April 02, 2005

NMI lands on NYT travel section

The Northern Mariana Islands got a major boost in its promotional effort—for free—after being featured in the Travel section of the highly respected newspaper The New York Times. James Brooke, the Northeast Asia correspondent for The New York Times' Tokyo Bureau, wrote about the Commonwealth in an article published on the April 3, 2005 edition of the newspaper, describing the CNMI as a "soothing beach therapy and a quick America fix" for the expatriate families in Asia. Brooke was on the island during the latter part of November last year to write about the local garment industry and the impact the lifting of the worldwide quota restrictions would have on the CNMI.

House OKs use of \$1.3M tobacco funds

The House of Representatives has passed a bill appropriating \$1.3 million of the Tobacco Control Funds for health-related programs. House Bill 14-8, authored by Rep. Benjamin B. Seman, aims to provide a total of \$605,000 to the Department of Public Health for the following: design and construction, including furnishing, of the Kagman Wellness Center (\$50,000); renovation and expansion of the San Roque Wellness Center (\$45,000); and renovation of the San Antonio Wellness Center (\$60,000). The bill also gives \$156,000 to the Office of the Special Assistant for Youth Affairs for the House of Manho-ben and youth learning centers on Saipan for the implementation of Youth Tobacco-Free programs.

Social Security benefits will be paid on time; other updates

Social Security and Supplemental Security Income benefit payments will continue to be paid on time during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Social Security Commissioner Andrew Saul gave this assurance yesterday and reminds the public to be aware of scammers who try to take advantage of the pandemic to trick people into providing personal information or payment via retail gift cards, wire transfers, internet currency, or by mailing cash, to maintain Social Security benefit payments or receive economic impact payments from the Department of the Treasury.

“Social Security will pay monthly benefits on time and these payments will not be af-

ected by the COVID-19 pandemic,” Saul said. “I want our beneficiaries to be aware that scammers may try to trick you into thinking the pandemic is stopping or somehow changing your Social Security payments, but that is not true. Don’t be fooled.”

The Department of the Treasury will soon provide information about economic impact payments under the recently enacted law, the *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act*, or *CARES Act*. Treasury, not Social Security, will be making direct payments to eligible people. Do not call Social Security about these payments as the agency does not have information to share.

The agency continues to

direct the public to its online self-service options whenever possible. Local offices are closed to the public but are available by phone. People can find their local field office phone number by accessing

the Field Office Locator.

To allow available agents to provide better phone coverage, the agency is temporarily changing the National 800 Number hours starting on Tuesday, March 31, 2020. The

hours will change from 7am to 7pm local time to 8am to 5:30pm local time. The agency is experiencing longer than normal wait times on the 800 Number and asks the public to remain patient, use its online

services at www.socialsecurity.gov, or call their local office.

Visit the agency’s COVID-19 web page at www.socialsecurity.gov/coronavirus/ for important information and updates. **(PR)**

PHILIPPINE HONORARY CONSULATE OFFICE

‘Respect, protect individual privacy during this public health emergency’

The Office of Philippine Honorary Consul to the CNMI Glicerio “Eli” Arago is appealing to the Filipino community, their families, and friends on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota to respect individual privacy in the midst of public health emergency brought by the spread of coronavirus.

At the same time, Arago is asking every Filipino citizen to strictly heed Gov. Ralph DLG Torres’ executive order. Among others, the governor’s executive order calls for strict implementation of social distancing policy and curfew

hours for all ages.

“It is our individual obligation to physically distance and, as members of this community, we have to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our small, close-knit community,” Arago said. “The governor has called on us stay indoors and impose social distancing among ourselves.”

At the same time, the Philippine Honorary Consulate calls on every Filipino “to exercise caution” in posting information about individuals with and suspected of having the coronavirus disease.

“The [Philippine Honorary Consulate] office had been receiving calls from individuals expressing concern about posting of information on social media about the identities and other information of those who have contracted the coronavirus, including those that are the suspected and or under quarantine,” Arago said. He reminded everyone to respect every individual’s right to privacy.

“I am asking every Filipino citizen in the CNMI to exercise prudence and caution in

what we post in any social media platform especially during this time of public health emergency,” he urged.

Only official announcements from government-recognized and-authorized entities are recognized, the Philippine Honorary Consulate noted.

In the CNMI, the Office of the Governor, the Governor’s COVID-19 Task Force, and the Commonwealth Health Care Corp. are the only recognized entities that issue announcements/updates relating to COVID-19. **(PR)**

United agrees to suspend all flights to the CNMI

At the request of Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, United Airlines has agreed to suspend all flights into and out of the CNMI from Guam from April 6 to 30, 2020. This means that the CNMI will not have any inbound or outbound passenger flights for most of the month of April.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority made the news official in a public notice on Tuesday informing the CNMI of the flight suspension for April.

Additionally, CPA assured the CNMI that U.S. Postal Services, air shipment of cargo to and from Guam, and medical evacuation transport for health emergencies will not be disrupted by the temporary suspension.

Daily transport of mail and cargo between the CNMI and Guam is serviced by Micronesian Air Cargo Services. Inter-island shipment services within the CNMI are handled by Star Marianas Air.

“We commend United Airlines for agreeing to suspend their flights for most of April, and I want to personally thank Dave Baker, his team, and the United Airlines leadership for being true partners in the CNMI’s fight against the spread of COVID-19. United has always been a true partner of the CNMI, and their support of our public health priorities is a testament to protecting our islands,” said Torres.

CPA board chair Kimberly King-Hinds noted that the governor consulted with CPA since January to request the federal government to suspend flights in the interest of preventing the spread of COVID-19. “The governor’s directive to CPA since January was to begin communicating with the airlines directly to consider

suspending flights into and out of the CNMI to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. We have a strong partnership with United Airlines, and CPA has been relaying the CNMI’s concerns about continued flights, even before the outbreak in Guam. This latest appeal by the governor was immediately addressed. We will continue to monitor the situation here on the ground, and I’m sure the governor will request for an extended suspension as needed.”

In his March 30, 2020 letter to Baker, Saipan station manager for United Airlines, Torres requested United Airlines to suspend all inbound travel into the CNMI for a minimum of 30 days except for cargo, medical emergencies, and COVID-19 response-related travel.

“With two confirmed cases in the CNMI, continued inbound arrivals, however limited, diverts desperately needed resources away from addressing our immediate need to contain the further spread of COVID-19 in our community. We ask for your cooperation and partnership to allow the CNMI to focus on our immediate COVID-19 response efforts to prevent the further spread of this deadly contagion in our community,” wrote Torres.

In his response to the governor and CNMI officials on Tuesday, Baker said, “In support of the CNMI request,” United Airlines agrees to suspend flying into and out of Saipan from April 6 to April 30, 2020. In addition, the Thursday, April 2, 2020, flight was cancelled.

Baker added that the Sunday, April 5, 2020, flight will proceed as scheduled. **(PR)**

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Traffic court cases rescheduled

The CNMI Office of the Clerk of Court, Superior Court would like to notify individuals with traffic citations, cases pursuant to a court order issued by Superior Court Presiding Judge Roberto C. Naraja that were initially scheduled for April 2, 2020m are rescheduled to May 14, 2020, at 9am.

All parties with traffic citation(s) scheduled for hearing (arraignment) during the following date will be held at the Supreme Court courtroom of the Guma Hustisia.

For additional information, you may contact the Office of the Clerk of Court at telephone number 234-4253, 783-8417, or 783-8522.

CNMI Radha Krishna temple closed

The CNMI Radha Krishna temple will be closed on Saturday night due to the COVID-19 pandemic and to prevent the gathering of people, in compliance with government orders and curfew. Pray for safety at your own home. **(PR)**

Guam Nat’l Guard postpones training

In order to meet current mission requirements and in accordance with COVID-19 guidelines, the Guam National Guard has postponed its upcoming unit training assembly, originally scheduled for April 4-5. Soldiers and airmen are advised to contact their unit orderly rooms or chain of command for more information. **(PR)**

CHC updates visiting rules

Effective immediately, the

Commonwealth Health Center will allow an expectant mother to identify a birthing partner who can be present in the delivery room with her during labor. However, after the baby is born, the birthing partner will be allowed a moment of physical contact with their newborn and will need to exit the labor and delivery area immediately. **(PR)**

Updated Bank of Hawaii hours

The Gualo Rai branch of Bank of Hawaii will open during the following hours:

- 9am–10am: Monday - Saturday (*man’āmkō* hour)
- 9am–4pm: Monday-Friday
- 9am–1pm: Saturday. **(PR)**

Transfer station, landfill hours



OFF LIMITS

Effective March 31, 2020, all areas of the American Memorial Park were closed to encourage the residents of Saipan to comply with social distancing guidance in support of federal and local efforts to slow the spread of the coronavirus. All access points into the park along pathways, roads, and parking areas are closed, including the marinas at Smiling Cove and Outer Cove.

KRIZEL TUAZON

Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXX, Issue No. 65

Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com

Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

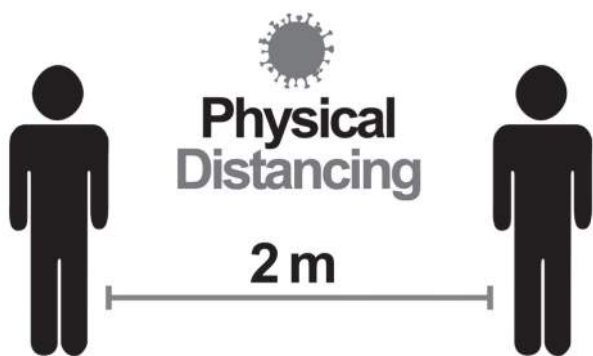
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AP The Associated Press

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EDITORIAL

Going viral: Coronavirus death totals are rising, but social distancing is working



MORE than 5,000 Americans, including more than 1,500 New Yorkers, have now died from coronavirus, serious milestones on a steep road with no exit ramp visible.

Dr. Deborah Birx, the White House COVID-19 coordinator, said on Monday that projections show up to 200,000 deaths nationwide “if we do things almost perfectly.”

If we don’t do things almost perfectly, failing to keep in place strong social distancing as long as necessary so that already overwhelmed hospitals drown in cases? Shudder to think.

Given steep trend lines here, the United States now leads the world in the number of cases, eclipsing China. That’s not in and of itself alarming. Given Beijing’s penchant for lying, its totals are not to be trusted. More to the point, case totals depend entirely on who gets tested, and standards vary wildly.

For the very same reason, death rates are also inconsistent and unreliable. New York’s now registers at 2% (that’s 1,550 divided by 75,795), which is lower than Italy’s and lower than once feared but orders of magnitude worse than the seasonal flu’s 0.1%.

This is absolutely not just another flu.

This virulent and highly communicable pathogen is in all 50 states, which means New York’s COVID-19 explosion likely preview what’s to come from Minnesota to Mississippi to Michigan to Montana.

(c) 2020 New York Daily News



When tracking the virus means tracking your citizens

Since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, some democracies around the world have used technology to avoid having to impose draconian mass quarantines that were common earlier this year in China. That’s reassuring—and it’s also worrying, because the very strategies that can help fight a plague can also be abused once it’s over.

Consider Taiwan, where an “electronic fence” allows local police to make regular phone calls to everyone who is home under quarantine; if the citizen doesn’t answer or the phone is out of power, police come to the home within 15 minutes. In South Korea, the government constantly updates a website that tracks the movements of people who have been infected, and issues alerts to the mobile phones of people in the geographic vicinity of an infected citizen. The Israeli government gained access to an archive of phone data to map the movements of infected people, then alerted those who had been in contact with them to self-isolate.

Again, invoking these powers is reasonable during a pandemic. Once the outbreak is over, however, this kind of power can and probably will be abused. What’s to stop a corrupt (or merely unscrupulous) leader from using such technologies to learn or even publicize the location of political opponents or dissidents?

“This is a genuine emergency and that justifies a lot of things that would not normally be justified,” says Jay Stanley, a senior policy analyst at the ACLU. “But we have to make sure that these temporary powers do not become permanent in a way that hurts everybody else.”

The good news is that the pandemic is not an endless war. Once there is a treatment or a vaccine, there will be a clear end date to the state of emergency. And the U.S. government has so far not broached the prospect of mapping the locations of large segments of the population.

In part that’s because doing so would be difficult. The data needed to track locations of U.S. citizens are mainly in the hands of private companies, such as wireless carriers and a network of companies that track the locations of app users and sell the data for marketing purposes. There is no central database.

Nonetheless, it’s not too soon to begin thinking about how to unwind any assumed emergency powers after the pandemic ends. Rep. Tom Malinowski, a Democrat from New Jersey who formerly served in the State Department, says that he hopes the U.S. does not have to carry out the kinds of measures adopted in Taiwan to enforce home quarantines of the infected. If the U.S. is forced to consider such measures, he says, “they had better

By ELI LAKE
Bloomberg News

Eli Lake is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist covering national security and foreign policy. He was the senior national security correspondent for the Daily Beast and covered national security and intelligence for the Washington Times, the New York Sun and UPI.



contain sunsets.”

Such harsh monitoring measures are unlikely now. But it’s possible that South Korea’s or Taiwan’s approach would be necessary if the U.S. has to battle a second wave of the virus.

To prepare for that day, says Stanley, it’s crucial to set up strict rules beforehand. Any location data, for example, should only be used by public health authorities for public health purposes. The programs should be temporary and the data should be deleted after the crisis ends.

Along these lines, Freedom House released a set of principles last week for protecting civil and human rights in the fight against COVID-19. It says any surveillance programs that use new technology to fight the spread of the disease should be “subject to independent oversight, and ‘firewalled’ from other commercial and governmental uses such as law enforcement and enforcement of immigration policies.”

“We recognize some of those technologies could be needed by democracies to track the pandemic,” says Freedom House President Michael Abramowitz. But governments should explain why the surveillance is needed, he says, contain an end date for the program and include clear lines of oversight from the judicial and legislative branches of government.

In the middle of a crisis, all of this might seem theoretical. The most essential tasks for democratic leaders are providing for the public safety and working to revive the economy. Yet it’s also important to remember that the state rarely relinquishes powers it amasses in a crisis.

After 9/11, the FBI was given broad new powers to demand data from private businesses. A dozen years later, both the ACLU and the Justice Department’s inspector general found that the use of that extraordinary power had become routine and unchecked. As Americans grapple with the current pandemic, they must be vigilant that their government not repeat the same mistake.

EDITORIAL POLICY

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Coronavirus makes America seem like a civilization in decline

Crisis such as wars, depressions, natural disasters and pandemics can reveal differences in how effectively a society organizes itself. In the 1600s and 1700s, for example, Britain's more advanced tax system allowed it to outspend Spain and France, while Prussia's efficient army let it overcome larger opponents such as Austria. In the Civil War, the Union's industrial prowess allowed it to outlast and overwhelm the agrarian Confederacy.

Pandemics aren't quite the same as wars, but they can also illustrate startling differences in the effectiveness of different countries. China, the place where coronavirus first appeared, initially tried to hush up evidence of the outbreak before pivoting to a draconian crackdown that was crudely effective. South Korea and Taiwan, scarred by the SARS epidemic 17 years ago, were ready with effective response systems that tested large numbers of people and traced their contacts in order to isolate contagious individuals before they showed symptoms. European countries tended to respond less effectively, with Italy and Spain having two of the worst outbreaks and the U.K. dithering over its strategy while wasting crucial time.

But perhaps no advanced nation has responded as poorly as the U.S. Perverse regulation, a bungled government test and fragmented supply chains held back testing for crucial weeks, allowing the epidemic to spread undetected. Abdication of leadership by the federal government left the job of shutdowns to state and local governments. Meanwhile, the president has issued highly unrealistic predictions that lockdowns could end in as little as two weeks. As a result, the U.S. now leads the world in cases of the coronavirus.

It's possible that the U.S.'s scattershot, slow and ineffective response to this crisis is a result of leadership failures or the recent era of political division. President Donald Trump eliminated a pandemic response team at the National Security Council, his appointments to the Centers for Disease Control and the Food

and Drug Administration have been controversial, and his messaging has generally been unhelpful and conflicting.

But the widespread nature of the failures suggest that coronavirus has exposed a deeper decline in the U.S.'s general effectiveness as a civilization. How recent that decline is, what its causes are and whether it can be reversed are all difficult but important questions.

One possibility is that the U.S. is burdened with outdated 18th-century institutions. Federalism leaves many powers to the states, making it hard for the central government to coordinate a pandemic response even when leadership is strong and competent. The Senate and the filibuster are set up to block swift legislative solutions to the nation's mounting challenges. Countries such as South Korea and Taiwan created their centralized systems much more recently.

But the U.S. made big moves toward centralization to deal with the Civil War, the Great Depression, World War II and the Cold War. Those successful responses show that the U.S. has been capable of adapting to the challenges of upheaval in the past. Recently, though, the U.S. has allowed its civil service to shrink and its salaries to become less competitive with the private sector, outsourcing many of the bureaucracy's functions:

It's tempting to blame this on small government ideology, but the coronavirus failures also involved over-regulation by the FDA. In general, fans of more government and less government seem unable to prioritize high-quality, effective government—what my Bloomberg Opinion colleague Tyler Cowen and his fellow economist Mark Koyama call state capacity.

There may be deeper reasons why U.S. state capacity is decaying. One possibility, elaborated by economist Mancur Olson, is that as time goes by, institutions tend to be captured by a web of special interest groups. In the case of coronavirus these could include companies that use patents and mergers to monopolize parts of the medical supply chain and local business lobbies that push

By NOAH SMITH

Bloomberg View

Noah Smith is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist. He was an assistant professor of finance at Stony Brook University, and he blogs at Noahpinion.



governments to delay lockdowns at the expense of public health.

An even more disturbing possibility is that declining U.S. effectiveness is the result of deepening racial and ethnic divisions. Economists have generally found that ethnic fragmentation—usually a legacy of colonialism—tends to make countries less willing to provide public goods. In the U.S., ethnic fragmentation is mainly a legacy of slavery, which resulted in lasting black-white tensions. The urge to slash and devalue government in the late 20th century almost certainly stemmed in part from many white Americans' fear that government would mostly benefit their poorer black countrymen. In recent decades, waves of mostly Hispanic and Asian immigration have created further ethnic divisions; Trump's presidency is often viewed as a backlash against that increasing diversity.

The crucial question is whether and how the decline in U.S. effectiveness might be reversed. Restoring the prestige of the civil service, centralizing functions such as responding to pandemics and electing competent and focused leaders are certainly all important steps. But in the long term, doing this will probably require cultivating a sense of national solidarity that crosses ethnic and racial lines while rooting out the entrenched power of special interests. Restoring the greatness of American civilization is likely to be a long and difficult road.

Where is the testing data we need to curb coronavirus and get back to work?

Back in the 1950s, the TV show "Dragnet's Sgt. Joe Friday famously advised witnesses: "Just the facts, ma'am." That phrase became a national slogan, long before the very concept of "facts" was clouded by social media.

As the number of coronavirus cases soars, with Americans anxious to know when stay-at-home orders will end, we desperately need the facts, based on reliable data.

Instead, we are deluged with COVID-19 misinformation from the White House and all over the world.

No one should be surprised that Russia and China are promoting the online lie that the virus is a U.S. bioweapon. They are also playing on America's political divisions over the virus, while hiding their own egregious errors and their true number of cases.

More disturbing is the tsunami of fake facts on the home front. President Donald Trump continues to spin medical misinformation daily, along with attacks on scientists or governors who question his handling of the virus. This feeds into the far-right's endless conspiracy theories, the latest being the claim that Dr. Anthony Fauci is part of a secret cabal to undermine Trump.

Even the sainted Fauci—who, with New York Governor Andrew Cuomo has become the voice of reason on COVID-19—can't give us the necessary answers, because the U.S. still doesn't have the data. And we don't have the data because we still aren't doing enough testing.

We aren't doing enough testing because the testing process has become bogged down in partisan politics.

President Trump says 1 million tests have now been done in the country. But we still lag many countries in per capita testing. And there's no sign the White House has developed a nation-wide policy of representative random sampling, including in geographical areas that still appear to have few cases.

"I've heard nothing from epidemiologists or schools of public health to corroborate those numbers, or this level of testing," says public health expert David Katz, founding director of the Yale-Griffin Prevention Research Center. "If the data are available, where are they? They should be in the public domain."

"We need representative random sampling of given populations for infections and immune status," Katz told me.

Without sampling asymptomatic populations, he says, scientists can't know how widespread the disease is, how many have recovered and whether we can transfer antibodies. They can't know to what extent those without symptoms transfer the disease, or what percentage of younger people get infected. They can't stop new hot spots from emerging after we come out of hiding.

Equally important, without the testing data, scientists can't map out a middle path between self-isolating and getting back to normal life too quickly.

A few weeks ago, Katz wrote a widely noted New York Times op-ed titled "Is Our Fight Against Coronavirus Worse than the Disease?" which some believe encouraged Trump to advocate the lifting of self-isolation by Easter.

That is a misunderstanding of his thesis, Katz says. His point: only with representative random sampling can we determine if it's safe for the healthy under-50 population to return to work relatively soon, while the at-risk populations self-isolate for longer. "This would establish a timeline to get back to life as we know it," he says.

It would also avoid prolonging a growing economic crisis that will adversely affect public health.

Ideally the government would convene public health teams to collect the data all across the country and assist with contact tracing. They would test populations without signs of the virus. The data and methods would be made transparent.

By TRUDY RUBIN

The Philadelphia Inquirer

Trudy Rubin is a columnist and editorial-board member for the Philadelphia Inquirer. Readers may write to her at: Philadelphia Inquirer, P.O. Box 8263, Philadelphia, Pa. 19101, or by email at trubin@phillynews.com.



Instead, we still have a fractured state-by-state system, with no national strategy of the public health manpower for testing, even if new, faster tests come on line soon. Without the data, we will be sheltering in place for much longer.






Yet, astonishingly, President Trump said Monday, "I haven't heard about testing being a problem." Even as several governors were telling him they still were short of test kits. He has slammed the beleaguered governors of Michigan and Washington as "that woman" and a "snake."

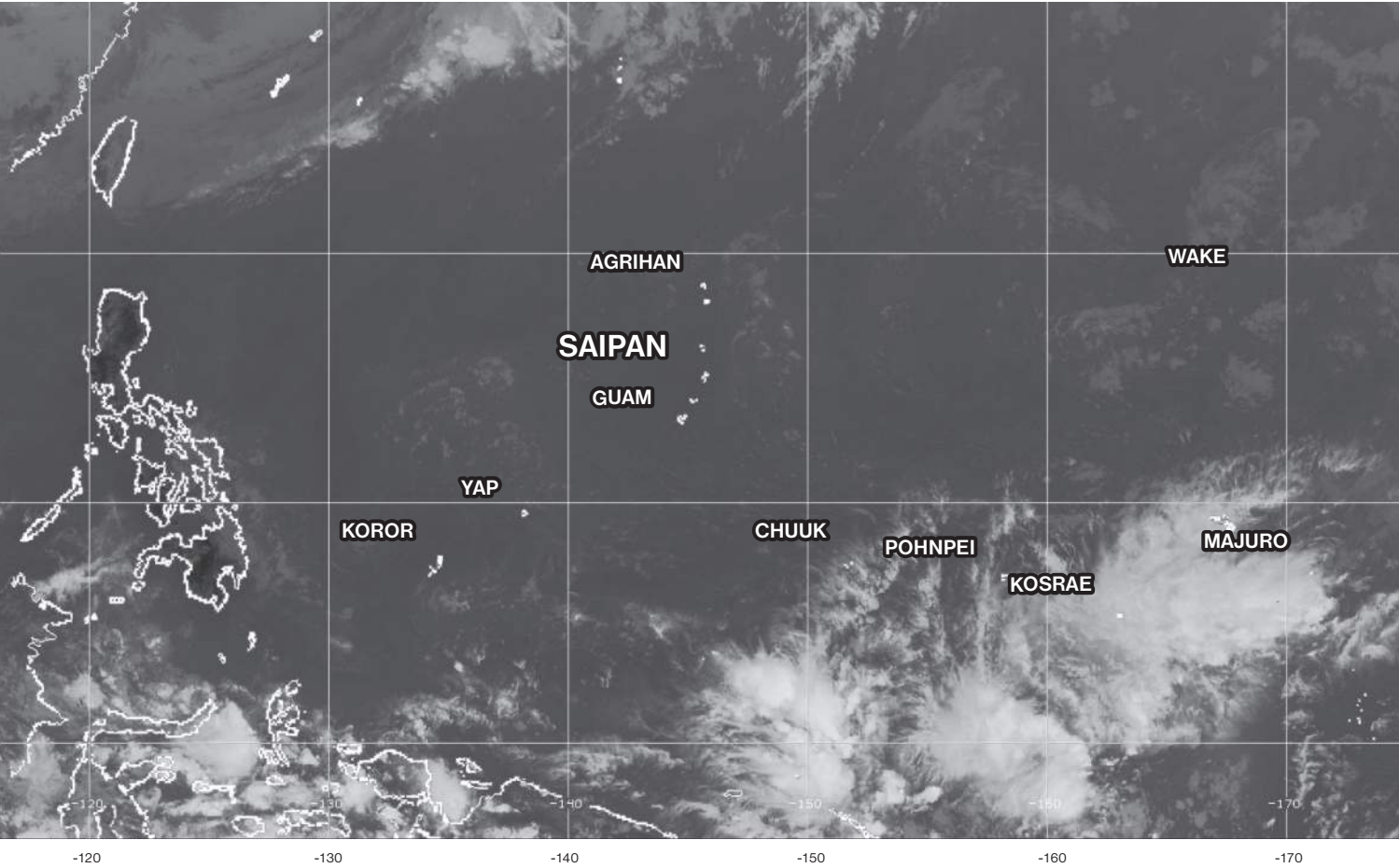
The testing process remains mired in partisan politics, as Trump disses Democratic governors while favoring Republicans like Florida's Ron DeSantis. A chaotic White House seems unable to lead the nation as a whole.

Cuomo promoted the right approach (after Trump falsely attacked him over his desperate demand for more ventilators.) "I'm not going to engage in politics (on coronavirus). It's anti-American," said the governor. "We are at war. There is no red and blue, it's red white and blue."

Without the Cuomo approach, the White House can't return the country to normal in the near term. It can't amass the data we need to get back to work before we, and the economy, go bonkers. It can't provide the public, irrespective of political party, with the facts to set us free.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY	
									
Partly cloudy. Isolated light showers. east winds 10 to 20 mph.		Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.	
87°	78°	88°	76°	88°	76°	88°	76°	88°	76°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 6:30 AM, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2020
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A dry trade-wind pattern dominates the region again. There will be a slight chance of showers through tonight, with the best chance being to the north over Tinian and Saipan. Not much improvement beginning Thursday, as only isolated light showers are expected through Saturday night. A weak trade-wind disturbance will approach the region on Sunday, bringing a little increase in clouds and showers through Monday night. This disturbance could bring a bit more needed rain to the islands.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA ▲ ▼ °F		
Guam and Rota	Windy	86° / 77°
Palau	Partly Cloudy	85° / 78°
Yap	Partly Cloudy	86° / 80°
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	87° / 81°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	84° / 79°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	84° / 79°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	84° / 80°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:11 AM	6:29 PM
Friday	6:11 AM	6:29 PM
Saturday	6:10 AM	6:29 PM
Sunday	6:09 AM	6:29 PM
Monday	6:08 AM	6:30 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	1:06 AM	12:39 PM
Friday	-	2:01 AM	1:38 PM
Saturday	-	2:54 AM	2:39 AM
Sunday	-	3:46 AM	3:41 PM
Monday	-	4:35 AM	4:42 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE ▲ ▼ °F			
Auckland	Mostly Sunny	70° / 59°	
Beijing	Sunny	79° / 45°	
Partly Cloudy	Showers	75° / 70°	
Honolulu	Showers	80° / 68°	
London	Mostly Cloudy	57° / 41°	
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	72° / 52°	
Manila	Mostly Sunny	93° / 79°	
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	79° / 54°	
Miami	Sunny	78° / 69°	
New York	Mostly Sunny	57° / 45°	
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	63° / 48°	
Paris	Mostly Cloudy	57° / 43°	
Busan	Sunny	64° / 46°	
Rome	Partly Cloudy	57° / 39°	
Salem	Mostly Sunny	73° / 49°	
San Francisco	Sunny	58° / 45°	
Seoul	Sunny	61° / 39°	
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	63° / 46°	
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	61° / 44°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY FEET		
3:35 AM	HIGH TIDE	1.63
8:43 AM	LOW TIDE	1.28
1:02 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.56
8:52 PM	LOW TIDE	0.01

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SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Friday, *Saipan Tribune* offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of \$180. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

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NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MARCH 28, 2020

DEPARTURES			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)			
UA117	9:15am	9:55am	4, 7
ARRIVALS			
GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA174	7:30am	8:11am	4, 7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

SAIPAN TO ROTA			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	7:30AM	8:00AM	Daily
1302	11:30AM	12:00PM	Daily
1303	4:00PM	4:30PM	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	8:15AM	8:45AM	Daily
3102	1:45PM	2:15PM	Daily
3103	4:45PM	5:15PM	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15PM	12:45PM	Daily

GUAM TO ROTA			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	1:00PM	1:30PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
1202	8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
1203	9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
1204	10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
1205	11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
1206	12:00PM	12:15PM	Daily
1207	1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
1208	2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
1209	3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
1210	4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
1211	5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
1212	6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2102	7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
2103	8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
2104	9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
2105	10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
2106	11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
2107	12:30PM	12:45PM	Daily
2108	1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2109	2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
2110	3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
2111	4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
2112	5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
2113	6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

Business

A guide to surviving financially as the bills come due

By SARAH SKIDMORE SELL
AP PERSONAL FINANCE WRITER

The coronavirus has dealt a financial blow to millions of Americans and now April's bills are coming due.

The good news is there is help available. Reach out immediately to your mortgage lender, student loan servicer or utility provider to see what's available. Other assistance, such as stimulus checks or unemployment benefits, will take more time. The bottom line is that you need to take action to seek certain forms of relief.

Here is help navigating the biggest issues:

HOUSING

Numerous mortgage lenders have said they are willing to work with distressed borrowers, including potentially suspending or reducing payments. Contact them immediately to find out about your options.

If you hold a mortgage backed by Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac—about half of all mortgage holders do—there is help. The mortgage buyers have suspended all foreclosures and evictions for homes owned by their companies. They've also expanded their forbearance program, which could suspend payments for up to a year. Ask the company you make your payments to if you hold a Fannie or Freddie loan.

The federal government has also halted foreclosures and evictions for mortgages insured by the Federal Housing Administration.

Renters' fate depends on where they live and who they rent from. Reach out to your landlord or property management company to ask for leniency. Several cities, such as Seattle, San Francisco and Boston, have halted evictions due to the coronavirus.

UTILITIES

Gas, electric, and other utility providers often have assistance programs for customers who cannot pay in full. There are also government and charitable programs to help low-income or struggling households. Ask the utility provider for referrals or call 2-1-1 for help finding local social service programs or charities. Several cities and regions have opted to halt utility shutoffs.

HEALTH INSURANCE

COBRA allows laid off workers at large employers to pay to continue their health insurance coverage, but it can be prohibitively expensive. Being laid off also qualifies as a life event for most insurers, which means someone could get on a partner's insurance outside of the normal open enrollment period.

Due to the coronavirus, a handful of

states have reopened their individual insurance exchanges to people who didn't find coverage during the regular sign-up windows that started last fall. People who have lost coverage through their employer are allowed to shop on the exchanges outside the regular enrollment period.

Some households may qualify for their state's Medicaid program too.

DEBT

If you are struggling to pay your credit card, auto loan or other debt, reach out to your lender. They've been instructed by federal regulators to work with borrowers impacted by the virus. Banks have said they are willing to make a variety of arrangements such as waiving fees, temporarily lowering interest rates or making other payment arrangements.

STUDENT LOANS

Federal loan borrowers can now seek an emergency administrative forbearance, which would allow them to postpone payments for up to 60 days. Borrowers must contact a servicer to apply.

The federal government also lowered the interest rate on all federally held student loans to 0%. However, that will not lower the monthly payment; instead it will apply the payment entirely to the principle balance.

The government has also temporarily halted collections and wage garnishment for borrowers who've fallen behind on their federal student loans. It has instructed private collection agencies to follow suit.

If you have private student loans, contact your servicer for their repayment options.

BUDGET

It's time to cut any non-essential expenses. That means ending your gym membership and trimming phone or internet plans. Daycare or monthly commuting passes might be paused or lowered during unemployment.

Consider extra work if you can to bring in income. If you still come up short, stay calm.

"Companies are rolling out programs to help with missed or late payments," said Kristin Pugh, a certified financial planner. "If you can't make a payment or can only make a partial payment you need to be proactive and reach out."

FPA is offering free financial guidance to Americans in need. A nonprofit credit counseling agency can also provide low cost help managing debt and creating a household budget.

If necessary, consider seeking aid for basic needs such as food and shelter. Or consider local food banks, which have more leniency in who they can help. United Way and 2-1-1 can also help you find social service support you may qualify for in your area.

In this March 18, 2020 file photo, visitors to the Department of Labor are turned away at the door by personnel due to closures over coronavirus concerns.

AP

Nation

White House projects 100K to 240K US deaths from virus

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Donald Trump on Tuesday warned Americans to brace for a “hell of a bad two weeks” ahead as the White House projected there could be 100,000 to 240,000 deaths in the U.S. from the coronavirus pandemic even if current social distancing guidelines are maintained.

Public health officials stressed that the number could be less if people across the country bear down on keeping their distance from one another.

“We really believe we can do a lot better than that,” said Dr. Deborah Birx, the coordinator of the White House

coronavirus task force. That would require all Americans to take seriously their role in preventing the spread of disease, she said.

Added Dr. Anthony Fauci, the government’s top infectious disease expert, “This is a number that we need to anticipate, but we don’t necessarily have to accept it as being inevitable.”

Trump called it “a matter of life and death” for Americans to heed his administration’s guidelines and predicted the country would soon see a “light at the end of the tunnel” in a pandemic that has killed more than 3,500 Americans

and infected 170,000 more.

“I want every American to be prepared for the hard days that lie ahead,” Trump said.

“This is going to be one of the roughest two or three weeks we’ve ever had in our country,” Trump added. “We’re going to lose thousands of people.”

The jaw-dropping projections were laid out during a grim, two-hour White House briefing. Officials described a death toll that in a best-case scenario would likely be greater than the more than 53,000 American lives lost during World War I. And the model’s high end neared the realm of

possibility that Americans lost to the virus could approach the 291,000 Americans killed on the battlefield during World II.

“There’s no magic bullet,” Birx said. “There’s no magic vaccine or therapy. It’s just behaviors. Each of our behaviors, translating into something that changes the course of this viral pandemic.”

Fauci called the numbers “sobering” and urged Americans to “step on the accelerator” with their collective mitigation efforts.

“We are continuing to see things go up,” Fauci said. “We cannot be discouraged by that because the mitigation is actu-

ally working and will work.”

Birx said pandemic forecasts initially predicted 1.5 million to 2.2 million deaths in the U.S. But that was a worst-case scenario, without efforts to slow the spread of the coronavirus through social distancing. She added that states that have not yet seen a spike in cases as New York has could take action to flatten the curve of rising hospitalizations and deaths.

It’s not only social distancing that could make a difference, but also the frantic efforts by hospitals around

the country to prepare for an onslaught of seriously ill patients. The better prepared hospitals are, the greater the chances of lives being saved.

There’s also a wild card when it comes to treatment: whether the experimental drug combination Trump has touted—a medicine for malaria and an antibiotic—will actually make a difference. That combination is already being used on thousands of patients, and Fauci said he would want to see a rigorous test of its effectiveness.



A Samaritan's Purse crew and medical personnel work on preparing to open a 68-bed emergency field hospital specially equipped with a respiratory unit in New York's Central Park, Tuesday, March 31, 2020, in New York.

ACROSS THE NATION

Census Day arrives with US almost paralyzed by coronavirus

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)—Census Day—the date used to reference where a person lives for the once-a-decade count—arrived Wednesday with a nation almost paralyzed by the spread of the novel coronavirus. But census officials vowed the job would be completed by its year-end deadline. The virus’s spread has forced the U.S. Census Bureau to suspend field operations for a month, from mid-March to mid-April, when the hiring process would be ramping up for up to 500,000 temporary census takers. The bureau also has delayed the start of counts for the homeless and people living in group quarters like college dorms and nursing homes, and has pushed back the deadline for wrapping up the head count from the end of July to mid-August. The Census Bureau is required by federal statute to send the president the counts that will be used to carve up congressional districts—a process known as apportionment—and draw state legislative districts by Dec. 31. Some groups are suggesting that the deadline be pushed back, though it’s currently mandated by federal law.

Trump says ‘life and death’ at stake in following guidelines

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Donald Trump warned Americans to brace for a “hell of a bad two weeks” ahead as the White House projected there could be 100,000 to 240,000 deaths in the U.S. from the coronavirus pandemic even if current social distancing guidelines are maintained. Public health officials stressed Wednesday that

the number could be less if people across the country bear down on keeping their distance from one another.

“We really believe we can do a lot better than that,” said Dr. Deborah Birx, the coordinator of the White House coronavirus task force. That would require all Americans to take seriously their role in preventing the spread of disease, she said. Added Dr. Anthony Fauci, the government’s top infectious disease expert, “This is a number that we need to anticipate, but we don’t necessarily have to accept it as being inevitable.”

Hospitals overflowing with bodies in US epicenter of virus

NEW YORK (AP)—It has become a grim ritual outside New York City’s hospitals: workers in protective gear loading the bodies of coronavirus victims into refrigerated trailers. A surge in deaths in the epicenter of the crisis in the U.S. has overwhelmed the city’s permanent morgues and filled storage spaces in many hospitals to capacity. The Federal Emergency Management Agency is sending 85 refrigerated trucks to serve as temporary morgues, the city said. It’s been that way for days at Brooklyn Hospital Center, where a worker Tuesday wheeled out a gurney carrying a body covered in white plastic, a forklift operator carefully raised a body into the trailer and undertakers came to claim the remains of yet another of the city’s nearly 1,000 coronavirus dead. The hospital said in a statement that the “unprecedented crisis calls for extraordinary measures” and that extra storage is needed “to accommodate the tragic spike in deaths, placing a strain on the entire system of care—from hospitals to funeral homes.”

Help heads to NYC

NEW YORK (AP)—With refrigerated morgue trucks parked on New York City’s streets to collect the surging number of dead, public health officials projected Tuesday that the coronavirus could ultimately kill more than 100,000 people across the U.S. Some states that have become hot spots warn they’re running low on ventilators, while two cruise ships pleaded for Florida to allow them to dock to carry off the sick and dead.

The number of U.S. deaths could range from 100,000 to 240,000 even if Americans continue to stay home and limit contact with others, experts predicted at a media briefing with President Donald Trump. But they said they

hope the figure won’t soar that high if everyone does their part to prevent the virus from spreading.

“I want every American to be prepared for the hard days that lie ahead,” said Trump, who has extended social distancing guidelines to April 30. “We’re going to go through a very tough two weeks.”

Elsewhere around the world, hard-hit Italy reported that the infection rate appears to be leveling off and new cases could start declining, but that the crisis is far from over. Spain struggled to fend off the collapse of its hospital system. Vladimir Putin’s Russia moved to crack down on quarantine violations and “fake news” about the

outbreak. And China edged closer to normal as stores in the epicenter city of Wuhan began reopening.

Worldwide, more than 850,000 people have been infected and over 42,000 have died, according to a tally kept by Johns Hopkins University. Italy and Spain accounted for half the deaths, while the U.S. had over 185,000 infections and more than 3,800 dead. That’s above the official toll of about 3,300 in China, where the virus began.

New York was the nation’s deadliest hot spot, with about 1,550 deaths statewide, most of them in New York City, which braced for things to get much worse in the coming weeks.

At Elmhurst Hospital in Queens, critically ill COVID-19 patients are filling intensive care units, surgical

floors and operating rooms and waiting in the emergency room for beds to become available, said Dr. Eric Wei of the city’s hospital agency.

“I’ve practiced emergency medicine for a long time, and I’m seeing things that I never could have imagined in terms of the things this virus can do to all ages, including people who were previously healthy,” he said.

A 1,000-bed emergency hospital set up at the mammoth Javits Convention Center began taking non-coronavirus patients to help relieve the city’s overwhelmed health system. A Navy hospital ship with 1,000 beds was expected to accept patients soon.

The indoor tennis center that is the site of the U.S. Open tournament is being turned into a hospital as well.

Asia

Hundreds of stranded Americans leave Nepal amid lockdown

KATHMANDU, Nepal (AP)—Hundreds of stranded Americans left Nepal on a repatriation flight Tuesday, days after a complete lockdown was imposed in the Himala-

yan nation to help fight the coronavirus.

A Qatar Airways flight arranged by the U.S. government flew out 302 Americans from Kathmandu's Tribhuvan

International Airport to Washington, D.C. The elderly, families with children and people with a medical condition were given priority on the flight.

The U.S. Embassy in Nepal estimates that 3,000 to 4,000 Americans are still in the country, but says that not all of them are seeking to leave. Plans for future flights to evacuate more of the Americans were unclear.

Passengers on board Tuesday's flight said they paid \$1,250 for the seat home.

"I have a three-month visa

and I was hoping to stay another month and a half or so," said one of the passengers, Ryan Paugh, a software engineer from Washington, D.C., who was trekking in Nepal. "We don't feel like we want to leave, but it is the right decision to get back to the U.S. until the pandemic can calm down."

Cameron Collins, a plumber from Albany, New York, was trekking and learning yoga when he too decided to shorten his trip and head back home.

"I just feel as if I should go home and be with my family,"

he said. "I am just nervous of the outcome."

There were an estimated 10,000 foreign tourists in Nepal when the lockdown was imposed last week. Over the weekend, two flights to Germany and one to France took Europeans out of the country.

The U.S. ambassador to Nepal, Randy Berry, said it took several days to gather Americans from various places and bring them to Kathmandu, Nepal's capital, before the flight could be arranged.

"We wanted to make sure

we had time to get those people back in from those remote locations so that we were able to send a flight back to the States in fact capturing as many people as we can," Berry said.

As a result of the lockdown, all flights have been halted in Nepal and vehicles have been ordered off the road, while businesses, markets and offices have been closed.

Nepal has confirmed five cases of the coronavirus, including one person who has recovered from it.

China state media reports 19 people killed in forest fire

BEIJING (AP)—Nineteen people have died while fighting a raging forest fire in southwestern China and hundreds of reinforcements were sent to fight the blaze and evacuate nearby residents, officials and state media reported Tuesday.

The area threatened by the fire in Sichuan province is thinly populated, but there was no estimate on how many people were leaving the evacuation zone. State media have described villages, a school, a chemical plant and other places as under threat.

It wasn't exactly clear when the deaths occurred, but an information officer in the city of Xichang was cited as saying the fire started on a farm Monday afternoon and quickly spread to nearby mountains due to strong winds. It said one of those killed was a guide and the rest were firefighters.

An emergency evacuation was initiated, and more than

300 professional firefighters and another 700 militiamen were sent to help, while Xinhua said another 885 firefighters from other cities in Sichuan were being deployed to Xichang, along with 142 fire engines, six remote water supply systems and extensive firefighting equipment. It said drones would be used to monitor the fire's progress.

Along with fighting the flames and evacuating residents, those force have also been deployed to protect key industrial infrastructure.

Almost exactly a year ago in the same area, a blaze high in the rugged forested mountains killed 30 people, 27 of them firefighters and three helpers.

That was China's worst death toll among firefighters since 2015, when an explosion at a chemical warehouse in the port of Tianjin killed 173 people, most of them firefighters and other first responders.

6 European nations condemn North Korean missile launches

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—The U.N. Security Council didn't issue a statement after discussing North Korea's latest missile tests but six European nations on the council are condemning Pyongyang's repeated launches, saying they illustrate its ongoing efforts to develop its ballistic missile programs and expand its arsenal.

Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Poland, and the United Kingdom said in a statement after a closed council discussion Tuesday that they are deeply concerned by North Korea's continued testing of missiles, using ballistic missile technology.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the country's official name, has conducted 17 sets of missile launches since May 2019 including four this month, the latest on March 29.

"We condemn such provocative actions," the Europeans said. "They undermine regional security and stability, as well as international peace and security, and are in clear

violation of unanimously adopted UN Security Council resolutions."

Germany's deputy U.N. ambassador Juergen Schulz told the council it was sad that North Korea is giving priority to its illegal weapons programs instead of making global solidarity and cooperation a top priority and working with the World Health Organization and the U.N. on "the unprecedented global threat faced by the COVID-19 pandemic."

"Unfortunately, there seems to be a lack of transparency in DPRK's cooperation with the U.N. over COVID-19 which we find dangerous and cynical," he said.

The Security Council committee monitoring sanctions against North Korea which Germany heads has granted "all COVID-19 related humanitarian exemption requests with unprecedented speed and urgency," Schulz said. "The sanctions are therefore no impediment to effectively combating COVID-19 in the DPRK."



In this March 25, 2020 photo, South Korean shoe repairman Kim Byung-rok speaks during an interview at his shop in Seoul, South Korea. AP

PAJU, South Korea (AP)—Kim Byung-rok survived tuberculosis when he was 23, but was left with one good lung. In his work polishing and mending shoes, he inhaled too much dirt.

So when he bought land on a small, quiet mountain in 2014, he wanted to heal, to do some farming—and to breathe fresh air.

But now Kim, 60, wants to donate a big chunk of his holdings to the local government. So many South Koreans are shutting their businesses and face declining incomes due to the coronavirus outbreak, which has hit the country hard; Kim thought the value of his land could be put to good use.

"I went through a rough childhood and I got help from others all the time. I've always thought I should one day become a person who helps others," Kim said at his Seoul shop, the thick grime under his nails testimony to how he

spends his days.

"Wouldn't it be good if I give the people strength and courage?" he said.

It has had that effect. An online media story on his offer has garnered more than 2,100 comments. Some call him "an angel" or "a person who deserves a seat in heaven."

Kim's three plots of land are located in Paju, near the border with North Korea. He bought the land when its prices plummeted due to North Korean missile tests, before they rose again after inter-Korean relations improved in recent years. He's since planted ginseng, herbs and other vegetables there.

He has pledged the largest parcel of about 10,000 pyeong (a bit more than 8 acres). Local officials value the gift at between 500 million and 700 million won, or between \$400,000 and \$570,000.

There are technicalities that must be worked out. Authorities are trying to make sure

Kim will not face gift taxes, but he's adamant: "If I have to pay that, I would accept that."

Kim, a devout Christian who jokingly calls himself "a lamb," has led a turbulent life.

His father died when he was 6, and his mother later married a man who beat and abused him. Kim ran away from his home and began working as a shoeshine boy when he was 10.

Tormented by the separation from his family, Kim drank and smoked excessively. Then came the TB. When he survived, he found relief in his faith and in volunteer service.

For the past 25 years, he has fixed thousands of used or castoff shoes and donated them to poor people, and provided free haircuts to older people with dementia or other health problems.

Kim and his wife now work together and make about 2 million to 3 million won (\$1,635-\$2,450) a month, considerably less than South

Korea's average household income of 4.8 million won. They live in a small, two-room apartment with two of their three adult children, one of them a 26-year-old son with Down syndrome.

Kim said that "what aches my heart the most" is the reaction of some friends and neighbors to his plan.

"They tell me things like, 'Hey, what the heck are you doing. ... Take care of your children first,'" Kim said. "But I've never had my kids go hungry and I've been living happily. ... I'm satisfied with my life and can't just ignore the poor and needy."

While nonstop global news about the effects of the coronavirus have become commonplace, so, too, are the stories about the kindness of strangers and individuals who have sacrificed for others. "One Good Thing" is an AP continuing series reflecting these acts of kindness.

World

PARIS (AP)—One by one, elderly residents of French nursing homes are going into forced isolation into their rooms. Their caregivers are walling themselves in as well. They are running out of body bags.

But no one knows for sure how many people have become sick. Governments in Europe's hardest-hit countries—Italy, Spain and France—are not routinely testing for coronavirus among elderly residents who fall ill in nursing homes or even those who eventually die there, including those who suffered from symptoms of the disease.

The three countries together make up around a third of the global pandemic's confirmed cases, and the lack of testing leaves hundreds, potentially thousands, of victims of the disease uncounted as health authorities try to trace its path.

The heavy dependency upon hospitals to count coronavirus fatalities poses particular problems for evaluating the spread of COVID-19 among the oldest citizens. Hospitals are increasingly reluctant to admit elderly coronavirus patients judged to have little chance of successful treatment.

Indications are they have paid a steep toll in anonymity. In France, the two regions hit earliest by the pandemic reported an over 30% increase in the number of deaths from March 1-16 compared to the previous year, according to the national statistics agency, which released the figures for the Haut-Rhin and southern Corsica regions late last week. Spain and Italy have not yet released initial death statistics for the month.

In Madrid, one of the most affected cities in Europe, a leading regional official acknowledged that the coronavirus infection of one elderly woman was confirmed after her death only because the nursing home's physician "insisted." Around the Italian city of Bergamo, the epicenter of the country's outbreak, 400 people died in a single week in early March—four times the number who died the same week the previous year, according to the Bergamo mayor's office. Only 91 of those had tested positive for the virus.

In France, once two residents of the same nursing home test positive, any other residents who fall sick and ultimately succumb to the disease are "assumed" to have the illness, but they are not ac-



Firefighters wearing protective suits wait outside a nursing home before disinfecting it in efforts to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus in Barcelona, Spain, Monday, March 30, 2020.

AP

Nursing homes have too few body bags, MANY UNCOUNTED DEAD

tually tested or counted among the national toll, which so far only includes those who have sought care in a hospital. The government has promised to include nursing home residents early this week but has yet to implement widespread testing of residents. The supply of body bags is dwindling, according to Marc Bourquin of the French hospital federation, an umbrella organization for half of the country's 7,000 nursing homes.

The challenge of tracking deaths is not unique to COVID-19. Many of the world's fatal illnesses are not counted individually. For example, U.S. influenza death tallies are drawn from mathematical models that rely on data taken at a network of hospitals. In the developing world, such estimates can be even cruder. About half of the 60 million people who die in the world each year have no death certificates or other records describing what killed them.

A study by Italy's national health institute used sampling to approach the question of how many elderly in nursing homes died with the coronavirus. In the hardest-hit region of Lombardy, half of all residents of nursing homes who died since Feb. 1 either had the vi-

rus or its flu-like symptoms, but most of the deaths only cited flu because tests were carried out irregularly. About 1 in 10 Italian nursing homes said they struggled to get residents into hospitals, and 1 in 4 had problems properly isolating those who tested positive for the virus.

Britain, too, is trying to trace the disease among those who never make it to the hospital. The Office for National Statistics added 40 deaths Tuesday for a toll of 210 in England and Wales, to include people who died in nursing homes and other settings.

In Germany, where deaths so far have been much lower than elsewhere in Europe and the United States, testing is routine for anyone with flu-like symptoms who visited a high-risk area or had contact with someone confirmed to have the virus. So if a case appears in a nursing home and patients or staff fall ill, testing is available to everyone.

France, where the government is bracing for a wave of sickness in the next 14 days, went from forbidding visitors to nursing homes on March 11 to asking the facilities to take even sharper measures last weekend.

"I'm asking the establish-

ments to isolate residents in their rooms," Olivier Véran, France's health minister, said Saturday. "We have to give priority to testing personnel."

At many nursing homes,

staff members are also volunteering to confine themselves with their charges.

"This is not something we do lightly. It's just that we have no choice," Eric-Angelo

Bellini, director of a nursing home in the central Vienne region, told Europe 1 radio. "Test us! Test all the staff, the residents!"

It is an especially sensitive subject in France, where every worker is required by law to dedicate a day of "solidarity" pay annually to the elderly and disabled after a heat wave in 2003 left 15,000 vulnerable people dead across the country.

While most people suffer only mild or moderate symptoms from COVID-19, the elderly are vulnerable to more severe illnesses, including pneumonia, which can be fatal.

In Spain, soldiers disinfecting nursing homes last week discovered that residents at several facilities were living among the bodies of people suspected of dying from the virus.

In the United States, several facilities have seen unusually high death tolls. Federal officials found that staff at multiple long-term care facilities contributed to the spread of COVID-19 among the elderly in the Seattle area.

In multiple nursing homes in France, including one for Holocaust survivors in Paris, the number of dead reaches into the double-digits, with far more believed infected. The fear is that their deaths will go unremarked.

"For the nursing homes, there will always be uncertainty," Bouquin said. "The procedure is a doctor has to indicate the cause of death. And for that, there has to be tests."

WORLD BRIEFS

UN Security Council urges cease-fire in Afghanistan

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—The U.N. Security Council urged Afghanistan's warring parties on Tuesday to heed the U.N. secretary-general's call for an immediate cease-fire to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and ensure delivery of humanitarian aid throughout the country. The council issued a press statement after a closed briefing by U.N. deputy special representative Ingrid Hayden who said the country "appears to be reaching a defining moment"—whether its leaders can join together "to engage in meaningful talks with the Taliban to achieve a sustainable peace." "The choice is made stark by the all-encompassing threat of COVID-19, which poses grave dangers to the health of Afghanistan's population and, potentially, to the stability of its institutions," she said in remarks sent to U.N. correspondents.

Puerto Rico shuts police stations amid COVID-19 outbreak

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP)—Puerto Rico on Tuesday closed its fourth police station in a week, raising concerns about the ability of the U.S. territory to respond to the coronavirus pandemic as officers accused the government of exposing one of the largest police departments in a U.S. jurisdiction to COVID-19. More than 100 officers now remain quarantined as dozens

of police await test results on an island that has reported eight deaths and more than 230 confirmed cases amid a month long curfew that has shuttered beaches, parks and non-essential businesses. "It's not fair that the government is dragging its feet. What do they want? To be left without police officers?" said Gregorio Matias, vice president of a local police union who demanded more protective equipment.

Facebook joins resistance to Bolsonaro virus claims

SAO PAULO (AP)—Major social media companies are taking aim at Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro's dismissal of social distancing, joining others in the country who have lined up against his controversial stance regarding the new coronavirus. Facebook and Instagram removed posts by the far-right leader Monday night that showed Bolsonaro walking around outside capital Brasilia on Sunday and mingling with groups. It was yet another affront to World Health Organization recommendations to self-isolate as a means to contain the pandemic. The companies' move came one day after Twitter also removed some Bolsonaro posts. Facebook, which owns Instagram, said in a statement that it removes content "that violates our community standards, which do not allow disinformation that might cause real damage to people."

Life & Style

CNN's Cuomo, with coronavirus, completes show from basement

NEW YORK (AP)—A bleary-eyed Chris Cuomo, saying he wanted to be a cautionary tale for his audience, anchored his CNN show from his basement Tuesday after testing positive for the coronavirus.



Cuomo

told viewers, "not for a hoax. But for the next few weeks of scary and painful realities. This is a fight. It's going to get worse. We're going to suffer."

Cuomo looked pale, his eyes watery and red-rimmed. He

Via remote link, he interviewed Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker, an emergency room nurse and CNN medical correspondent Dr. Sanjay Gupta, who expressed worry about one of Cuomo's symptoms.

"Brace yourself," Cuomo

took a few deep breaths to compose himself. He repeated himself. Even Gupta said he didn't look good, and said he'd call later to talk about a tightness Cuomo was feeling in his chest.

The 49-year-old newsman,

Actor Andrew Jack dies of coronavirus at 76 in Britain

SYDNEY (AP)—Star Wars actor Andrew Jack has died in Britain as a result of the coronavirus, his agent said on Wednesday. He was 76.

The actor, who also worked as a dialect coach, died in a hospital in Surrey on Tuesday, Jack's agent Jill McCullough said in a statement.

"Andrew lived on one of the oldest working houseboats on the Thames, he was fiercely independent but madly in love with his wife, also a dialect coach," McCullough said.

Jack appeared in "Star Wars: Episode VIII—The Last Jedi" as General Ematt, as well as "Solo: A Star Wars Story" and "Star Wars: Episode VII—The Force Awakens."

His wife, Gabrielle Rogers, who is quarantined in Australia,

posted on social media: "Andrew Jack was diagnosed with coronavirus 2 days ago. He was in no pain, and he slipped away peacefully knowing that his family were all 'with' him."

Passengers arriving in Australia must isolate in hotels for two weeks.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia and death.

Jack's clients for his dialect coaching included Robert Downey Jr. and Chris Hemsworth.

whose brother, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, has logged just as much television airtime lately with daily briefings on how the disease is affecting his state, said earlier that he knew it was a matter of time because of how often he was exposed to people. He said he's staying in the basement of his Long Island home

to protect himself from his wife and children.

The New York governor, who appeared with his brother on CNN by remote link the night before, also used the personal story to warn others during his press briefing Tuesday. He noted that he had scolded Chris for having their 88-year-old mother, Matilda, visiting

Chris' home two weeks ago.

"It's my family, it's your family, it's all of our families," he said. "This virus is so insidious, and we have to keep that in mind."

Chris Cuomo said he thought his mom would be safer at his house than in her New York City apartment, but his brother persuaded him to

have her stay at his sister's place in Westchester County.

Some competitors, including Sean Hannity and Geraldo Rivera of Fox News Channel, and Joy Reid and Ali Velshi of MSNBC, sent best wishes to Cuomo through social media Tuesday.

He said he appreciated the sympathy from well-wishers but tried to deflect it.

Need a laugh? SiriusXM launches channel for female comics



This combination photo shows comedians, from left, Amy Schumer, Wanda Sykes, Whoopi Goldberg and Joan Rivers, whose comedy will be featured on a new SiriusXM comedy channel called She's So Funny debuting on April Fool's Day.

NEW YORK (AP)—The midst of a global pandemic might seem like an odd time to launch a radio channel devoted to female comedians, but executives at SiriusXM believe that it's precisely the right time.

Listenership at the satellite radio company's eight current comedy channels has been up, and the company feels that it is filling a need with people stuck at home.

The channel, dubbed She's So Funny, debuts Wednesday at 7 a.m. Eastern—the morning

of April Fool's Day, naturally.

"We have a lot of people who are very scared," said Scott Greenstein, president and chief content officer at SiriusXM. "You have a lot of people who want to feel OK in a difficult time, to have a little humor and try to laugh."

The number of people listening to SiriusXM's comedy channels online this year is up 80% over last year, said the company, which doesn't have ratings for the satellite portion of its distribution. That's through

March 22, which includes a little bit of the shut-in period.

Greenstein said Sirius has suffered no service interruptions due to the virus outbreak that has forced many employees to work at home.

"We've been lucky," he said. "We did a fair amount of planning through the years."

SiriusXM also announced that starting Tuesday, it is opening up streams of all of its programming for free online, through May 15, as a gesture to people at home be-

cause of the virus.

Among the current Sirius comedy channels are ones featuring the works of Kevin Hart, George Carlin, Jeff Foxworthy and Larry the Cable Guy. There's a "raw" channel for comics who work blue and a clean one for those who don't. The She's So Funny channel is an outgrowth of a listener survey revealing people wanted to hear more from women, said Jack Vaughn, senior vice president of comedy at Sirius.

Man's closeness to mother puts distance in relationship

DEAR ABBY: My boyfriend is 31 and still goes to his mother's house and spends the night, even though we live less than 15 minutes away. He knows it upsets me, yet every time she asks him to spend the night, he goes. He left our children home alone while I worked overnight because it was her birthday.

His relationship with his mother is a large part of why we aren't married, and the fact that he continues to spend the night there is leading to huge fights. Is this normal or not?

FED UP IN OHIO

DEAR FED UP: That your boyfriend would leave minor children alone and without supervision while he spends the night with his mother -- birthday or not -- is unusual. It would have been more logical for him to have invited his mother to your house to celebrate the occasion.

That said, you cannot control what your boyfriend does. I suspect there's a lot more wrong with your relationship than the fact that he hasn't emotionally separated from his mother. You two could benefit from couples counseling to sort out not only his relationship with his mother, but also your relationship with each other. If he won't go, go alone to get clarity on how to proceed with your future.

DEAR ABBY: I have a good friend who has a frustratingly bad habit. Every year, she makes a point of mentioning her upcoming birthday at least a couple of times a week, starting

about four months before the day. It is never mentioned the rest of the year.

If I want to buy someone a birthday gift, I make the effort to find out when their special day is and act accordingly. If I don't wish to provide a gift, then no amount of nagging will guilt me into it. I do not want to end the friendship because she is an otherwise nice person and a good friend, but I'm sick of the nagging. Any suggestions on how to tactfully but effectively deal with this?

NAGGED IN FLORIDA

DEAR NAGGED: The next time your friend starts up, respond by saying, "You have already told me." When she does it for the third time say, "You know, this is getting old. It looks like you are soliciting a gift." Then tell her if she keeps it up, you WON'T buy her one. I'll bet it works!

DEAR ABBY: Sometimes when my boyfriend and I go out with another couple and I'm talking, he abruptly says, "I never get a word in," or "Can anyone else talk?" Abby, if I don't talk, he just sits there like a lump on a log. It's embarrassing, and I have asked him not to say that in front of other people. How should I respond when he makes cruel remarks in front of other people?

AWKWARD SILENCE IN NEW YORK

DEAR AWKWARD: Is what your boyfriend says

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

true? Or is it that he has trouble making social conversation? If that's the case, perhaps you should make more of an effort to draw the "lump" into the conversation. However, if it's not true, then what he's doing may be an effort to appear to be the dominant partner in your relationship.

When it happens again—and I'm betting it will—your response should be, "Ouch. That was hurtful and embarrassing. If you have a complaint about my behavior, please be considerate and make it privately."

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



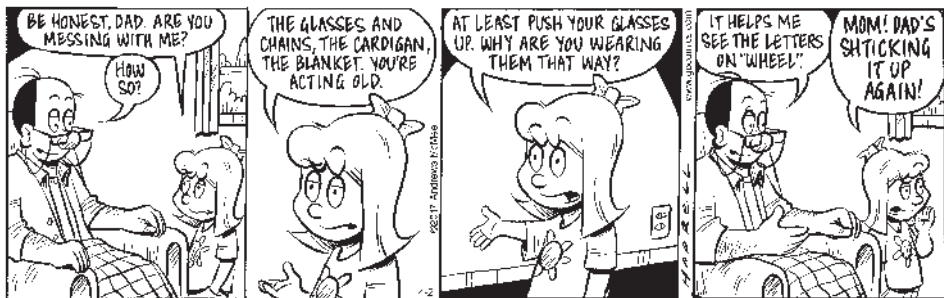
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



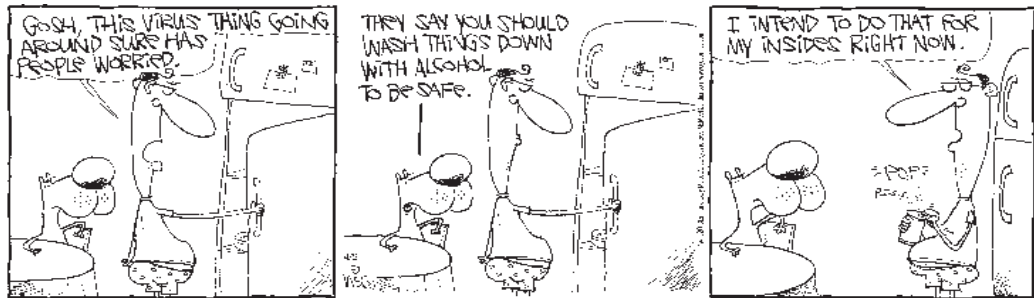
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Apply cream
4 "The Lion King" villain
8 Forehead
12 Yale grad
13 North —
14 Swiss river
15 Book cover parts
17 Parade initials
18 Not 'neath
19 Lacking purpose
21 Politician Mitt
24 "The Matrix" role
25 Onassis nickname
26 Melancholy
28 Rich cake
32 Honey drink
34 Sportage maker
36 Close
37 Sun-powered

DOWN

39 Santa's helper
41 Cato's
42 "Unh-unh"
44 Silk or satin, e.g.
46 Advertised insistently
50 As well
51 Hoops great
52 Abe Lincoln's first home
56 Teen's woe
57 Entreaty
58 Wedding words
59 Hardy heroine
60 Coin aperture
61 Pester
20 Convened
21 Runs (into)
22 Twistable cookie
23 Tibetan beast
27 Conk out
29 Harbinger of spring
30 Curbside yell
31 Idle of Monty Python
33 Hangs loosely
35 TV alien
38 Joplin piece
40 Nabob
43 Lends a hand
45 Large snake
46 Bog fuel
47 Lingerie trim
48 Grecian vessels
49 Ken or Barbie
53 Earth (Pref.)
54 Writer Tarbell
55 Eggy quaff

Solution time: 24 mins.

Yesterday's answer 4-2

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Asa Butterfield, 23; Hillary Scott, 34; Taran Killam, 38; Susan Boyle, 59.

Happy Birthday: A little will go a long way this year. Hone your skills, and focus on what matters the most to you. You've spent too many years spreading yourself thin doing for others and not enough time engaging in your own best interests. It's your turn to head in a direction that will bring you the greatest joy. Your numbers are 5, 12, 19, 27, 35, 38, 42.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You may feel targeted. Keep a low profile, take care of your responsibilities and don't let anyone goad you into a senseless argument. It's what you accomplish that will matter when all is said and done. ★★

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Consider your emotional needs, and start to make the changes necessary to ensure your happiness. Get the lowdown regarding the paperwork, financial plan or legal implications that you will have to deal with to get what you want. Romance is on the rise. ★★★★★

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Update your skills, knowledge and technological savvy. Refuse to let someone from your past disrupt your plans. Keep your feet planted on the ground when it comes to emotional matters. Willpower will be required if you want to get ahead. ★★★

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Emotional indulgence will be your enemy. Stay focused, and expand your knowledge, ideas and plans. Don't lose sight of your goals. Keep

life simple, live in the moment and don't overreact. Choose your words wisely, and make creativity a priority. ★★★

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Refuse to let an unexpected change lead to an argument. Keep your opinions to yourself until you know all the facts and you are sure you can live with the results should things not go your way. Take the high road. 3 stars

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Your kindness and generosity are admirable, but don't let anyone take advantage of you. Listen and make suggestions, but don't offer handouts. A partnership is looking exceptionally fortuitous. A makeover will lift your spirits and lead to compliments. ★★★★★

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Look for the good in whatever situation you face, and you will come out on top. If you overreact, take on too much or let someone bully you, it will lead to discord. Take pride in handling matters with grace and dignity. ★★

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Use your imagination, be creative and follow your heart. You have so much to gain if you pursue what makes you happy. Surround yourself with supportive people, not those who are jealous or use emotional manipulation. ★★★★★

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Pay off any personal debts as quickly as possible. Cut your overhead, and start thinking about your financial future. How you handle matters now will make a difference to the lifestyle you lead in the future. Avoid excess and indulgence. ★★★

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Make a change at home that will please someone you love or will bring you joy. Love and romance are on the rise, and the way you address personal matters will determine the outcome. Be open about the way you feel. ★★★★★

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Concentrate on self-improvement, not trying to change others. Your health and emotional well-being should be priorities. Do what's best for you instead of trying to please everyone around you. Be responsible for your happiness, and follow your heart. ★★★

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Share your thoughts and experience with someone you feel will benefit and offer something in return. A smart investment will pay off if you are patient and disciplined in the way you go about getting things done. ★★★★★

Birthday Baby: You are curious, engaging and observant. You are astute and intuitive.

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

4x4 grid with numbers 1-9. Difficulty Level ★★★

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

4x4 grid with numbers 1-9. Difficulty Level ★★★

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-800-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID CUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

LOS ANGELES MOUNTAIN LIONS Solution: 11 letters

Word search grid with letters A-Z.

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Adapt. Area, Breed, Canyon, Carnivore, City, Coast, Coexist, Cougar, Coyotes, Cross, Female, Forest, Freeways, Genetics, Ghost Cat, Goat, Griffith Park, Kittens, Mate, Monica, Movement, Nap, Offspring, Pacific, Padres, Puma, Ranch, Range, Region, Residents, Roam, Santa, Sheep, Sighting, Simi Hills, Solitary, Study, Suburb, Tracks, Verdugo

Yesterday's Answer: Swojska
The NEW Treasury 39 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

NFL playoffs expanded to 14 teams



NEW YORK (AP)—The NFL is gearing up for a normal season and playoffs—with two additional wild-card teams in the Super Bowl chase.

NFL team owners voted Tuesday to expand the playoffs by one team in each conference for a total of 14 next season as they continue to plan for the 2020 season to begin on time.

During a conference call to discuss league business after the annual meetings were canceled due to the new coronavirus, the owners also awarded one of those extra games to CBS and one to NBC. Three-fourths of the 32 owners needed to approve the change, and the vote was unanimous, football operations chief Troy Vincent said.

As for opening the season on Sept. 10 as scheduled, NFL lead counsel Jeff Pash said: “All of our focus has been on a normal traditional season, starting on time, playing before fans in our regular stadiums and going through our full 16-game regular season and a full playoffs.”

That would include the two stadiums still under construction in Las Vegas and Los Angeles, plus international games in England and Mexico.

“I expect that international games will be part of our schedule for this year,” Pash added. “We’re optimistic just as we expect conditions in the United States to permit playing a full season that that will be the case for our international partners as well. Obviously, that’s something that we’ll have to work closely with the authorities, public health and other government authorities in those other countries to make sure it’s entirely safe.”

Contingencies are being discussed for all potential interruptions caused by the coronavirus.

As for the first expansion of the postseason field since 1990, when the NFL went from 10 qualifiers to 12, only the teams with the best record in the AFC and NFC will get a bye under the new format; the top two teams in each conference skipped wild-card weekend in the past. The seventh seed will play No. 2, the sixth will visit No. 3 and the fifth will be at the fourth seed for wild-card games.

Three games are set for Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 9-10—pending the NFL schedule going forward as planned; that schedule likely will be released on May 9, according to Brian Rolapp, the league’s chief media and business of-



AP
Kansas City Chiefs cornerback Kendall Fuller (29) intercepts a ball intended for San Francisco 49ers wide receiver Deebo Samuel (19) during the NFL Super Bowl LIV football game, Feb. 2, 2020 in Miami Gardens, Fla.

O’Reilly said Las Vegas, scheduled to host the draft this year, will get consideration for 2022; the 2021 draft will be held in Cleveland.

“2022 is an option for Las Vegas,” he said. “We need some time to work through that with Las Vegas and the Raiders, but that is something we are considering.”

This week, Vincent sent a letter to several prospects inviting them to participate “live” in the draft.

“We hope that you will start your NFL journey with us as part of the NFL family,” Vincent wrote. “At this time, we are working on the plan for draft. As you can imagine, it is a bit of a moving target with all that is going on.

“We are contemplating several options that we will be communicating to you once details are confirmed. We want to ensure that you and your family stay safe while we develop the best way to give you a great experience and highlight your accomplishments as you are drafted into the NFL.”

ficer, to give the NFL “flexibility.”

CBS will broadcast one of the new games on Jan. 10 at approximately 4:40 p.m. EST. The game will also be available via live stream on CBS All Access. A separately produced telecast of the game tailored for a younger audience will air on Nickelodeon.

NBC, its new streaming service Peacock and Spanish-language Telemundo will broadcast the other new game on Jan. 10 at approximately 8:15 p.m. EST.

“It’s definitely going to be different,” Washington Redskins linebacker Thomas Davis said. “It’s going to be weird. Essentially, the second team (in each conference) is being penalized for being a good football team.

“It just makes it more competitive, it adds more teams in and it allows teams that are hot late in the season like the Titans to be able to make a run—a team that might not normally be in the playoffs is getting that opportunity. I like it, though.”

Team presidents and owners were advised of current plans for conducting the draft on April 23-25.

Peter O’Reilly, who oversees organization of major events such as the Super Bowl and draft, said all of the NFL’s preparations have been designed to “ensure the selection process is sound.” That means equitable arrangements for every team; “celebrating and welcoming”

draftees to the league; fan involvement “providing an escape for our fans and perhaps allowing virtual fan access”; and as a fundraiser for people and communities affected by the pandemic.

O’Reilly stressed that social distancing will be maintained,

with no more than 10 people together, remaining at least six feet apart. Anyone who is ill will be kept away.

Commissioner Roger Goodell will make the first-round selection announcements from a central hub, and the telecasts will have con-

nectivity at the 32 teams and potentially at some players’ or fans’ homes.

Vincent noted that the powerful competition committee is discussing a potential one-shot extension of the time limit on a draft slot so teams can complete a trade.

FIFA sees ‘duty’ to help as pandemic ravages soccer finances

SWITZERLAND (AP)—As the economic consequences of the coronavirus pandemic ripple across world football, FIFA sees a “duty” to offer a lifeline from its vast cash reserves.

Talks are underway about how the governing body’s support fund will be distributed, with the global players’ union appealing for cash to be targeted at the smaller markets, rather than the elite end of the game.

No part of the world’s biggest sport has been untouched by the rapid spread of the COVID-19 disease as games have been wiped out across professional leagues.

Barcelona and Juventus players have taken pay cuts, former Slovakian champion Zilina is entering liquidation and staff were being furloughed across the game worldwide, including Uruguay coach Oscar Tabarez and hundreds of his federation colleagues.

Now FIFA is trying to show why it has amassed reserves it last reported at \$2.745 billion, to help soccer when it is

most in need.

“FIFA is in a strong financial situation and it’s our duty to do the utmost to help them in their hour of need,” world football’s governing body said in a statement to The Associated Press on Tuesday.

“FIFA is working on possibilities to provide assistance to the football community around the world after making a comprehensive assessment of the financial impact this pandemic will have on football.”

FIFA President Gianni Infantino and his vice presidents first agreed two weeks ago to explore a “support fund,” and now talks are being expanded across the six regional confederations and member associations to determine the mechanism to distribute the cash.

It should be aimed at the most vulnerable in smaller soccer markets, according to FIFPro general secretary Jonas Baer-Hoffmann, who represents 65,000 members in national player unions worldwide.

“There is an urgency difference ... we need to safeguard the weakest links in this pyramid,” Baer-Hoffmann said. “We will see very many individuals whose livelihoods depend on these smaller clubs. ... Once clubs are gone, we won’t get them back.”

Even at the top of the game, cutbacks unimaginable even a month ago are being implemented.

Tottenham, which reached the Champions League final last season, announced Tuesday that 550 non-playing staff were having salaries reduced by 20% for the next two months or being furloughed under a government scheme to protect jobs.

Tottenham chairman Daniel Levy urged coach Jose Mourinho and his players to do “their bit for the football ecosystem” as the bodies representing manager and players in England discuss the need to accept reduced pay across the Premier League.

“We may be the eighth largest club in the world by

revenue according to the Deloitte survey,” Levy said, “but all that historical data is totally irrelevant as this virus has no boundaries.”

The biggest moneymaker in the game, Barcelona, has had to slash salaries of players—including Lionel Messi—by 70% to save nearly 16 million euros (\$17 million) a month. Spain has been one of the hardest-hit countries by the pandemic, with nearly 95,000 cases of infections and more than 8,100 deaths.

Having expected revenue to exceed 1 billion euros this season for the first time, Barcelona president Josep Bartomeu is now braced for more austere times.

“We will change models and the way we do things,” Bartomeu said. “We will have to adapt and be a pioneer.”

In Italy, where the season was halted three weeks ago, Juventus is making savings of 90 million euros after Cristiano Ronaldo and his Juventus teammates agreed to forgo four months worth of wages along with coach Maurizio Sarri.

USA Basketball may face roster issues for '21

NEW YORK (AP)—Knowing when the rescheduled Tokyo Olympics will be solves one problem for USA Basketball.

And it creates a few others.

Let's assume that the 2020-21 NBA season is over by next July, a premise that also assumes some sort of normalcy returns to the sports world and that the global coronavirus pandemic slows to the point where games can be played again. That would also mean that NBA players and coaches would be available, schedule-wise, to participate in the Tokyo Olympics next summer as planned.

That's good news. That is, until free agency is added to the equation.

The NBA summer of 2021 is supposed to be another free agent extravaganza, one where plenty of the league's biggest names and top USA Basketball candidates like LeBron James, Kawhi Leonard, Chris Paul, Bam Adebayo, Kyle Lowry and more could be on the market. This summer would have been so much easier for USA Basketball from that standpoint, with Anthony Davis one of the few big-name stars who could become free agents when this season ends.

U.S. coach Gregg Popovich and managing director Jerry Colangelo would have had probably anyone they wanted this summer.

Next summer, that might be more of a challenge. The Olympics are now set to start July 23, 2021. That means training camp, in theory, would start around July 3 or 4, right around what could be the peak of the free-agent shopping period.



In this undated file photo, Oklahoma City Thunder's Chris Paul takes a shot against Milwaukee Bucks' Donte DiVincenzo at Chesapeake Energy Arena in Oklahoma City.

This has been an issue before. Deron Williams couldn't participate in contact portions of practice with the 2012 U.S. Olympic team during its training camp in Las Vegas until he signed his new contract with the Brooklyn Nets. Training camp started before the moratorium on player signings ended that summer, so the Americans and Williams were in a delicate situation. He signed the deal on an iPad at the first possible moment, got on the court the next day and everything was fine.

But expect lots of that next summer: Players who are about to sign new huge-money deals won't risk going all-out in practice with the Olympic team before those contracts are finalized. Once they sign, sure. Beforehand, not happening.

That won't be ideal, and will add to the challenge.

Among the lessons that needed to be learned from last summer's Basketball World Cup in China, where the Americans finished seventh, include: The world is no longer afraid of the Americans, and that players are no longer afraid to say no to USA Basketball. Colangelo and the U.S. staff needed to cycle through about 50 names before getting to a 12-man roster for the tournament in China, with most players backing out for a variety of reasons along the way. The Americans cut only two; a few got hurt, and everybody else made the decision for themselves.

Popovich left China saying that gold medals were no longer guaranteed for the U.S. Kobe Bryant, who was an am-

bassador for that World Cup, was in Beijing for the final games last August and said the same thing.

"It's not a matter of the rest of the world catching up to the U.S. It's that the rest of the world has been caught up for quite some time," Bryant, who died in a January helicopter crash, said in China last summer. "It's to the point now where the U.S., we're going to win some and we're going to lose some. That's just how it goes."

The one-year delay is going to cause issues for some other nations as well.

If Greece qualifies for the Olympics—the tournaments that will decide the last four spots are going to be rescheduled at some point, with Greece one of the 24 nations still in that mix—then reigning NBA MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo will have a massive decision to make. And he'll have to make it probably around the same time that he signs a new NBA contract worth something around \$200 million. Rudy Gobert can be free in the summer of 2021 as well, which could impact France. Marc Gasol will be a year older, which might weigh on his decision to play for Spain or not.

But for the Americans, next summer could be particularly problematic. And again, that's if next season in the NBA is even over by July. Until USA Basketball knows what will happen there, it remains stuck in limbo and unable to resume the process of building the next Olympic roster.

All that is clear so far is the road to another gold medal for the red, white and blue won't be easy.



NEW YORK (AP)—Kevin Durant and Trae Young will lead a 16-player field of NBA players in an NBA 2K20 tournament airing on ESPN.

The NBA, the players' association and 2K announced the NBA 2K Players Tournament on Tuesday. Play begins Friday, and the winner of the week-long competition will receive a \$100,000 donation to a coronavirus-related relief effort of their choice.

Player have been seeded according to their NBA 2K player rating—from Durant's 96 down to Derrick Jones Jr.'s 78—and tenure. Durant, the Brooklyn Nets star who sat out this NBA season due to injury, will face Jones in the first game Friday night. Other matches will air on ESPN2. The championship is set for April 11.

Durant, Young highlight players-only NBA 2K tourney

Participants will each select a pool of eight teams prior to the tournament and can only play with each club once throughout the tournament. Rounds one and two will be single elimination, and the semifinals and finals will be best-of-three.

The other matchups include Young vs. Harrison Barnes, Hassan Whiteside vs. Pat Beverley, Donovan Mitchell vs. Rui Hachimura, Devin Booker vs. Michael Porter Jr., Andre Drummond vs. DeMarcus Cousins, Zach LaVine vs. Deandre Ayton and Montrezl Harrell vs. Domantas Sabonis.

The NBA has been shut down since March 11, the night that Utah center Rudy Gobert became the first player in the league to have a positive diagnosis for the virus revealed. The league is still

discussing scenarios for resuming play once allowed.

Lakers: Players symptoms-free

On March 19, news broke that two players Los Angeles Lakers players had tested positive for COVID-19.

The team announced on Tuesday that after a 14-day quarantine, all players are now symptom-free. The players who reportedly tested positive did not identify themselves.

The Lakers diagnoses were part of a wave of positive coronavirus tests among NBA players and personnel.

Utah Jazz center Rudy Gobert's positive test prompted the suspension of the NBA season, which started a domino effect of major sports shutdowns amid the pandemic. His teammate Donovan Mitchell also

tested positive.

Brooklyn Nets star Kevin Durant later announced that he was one of four players that the team said tested positive for the disease. The other three players didn't identify themselves.

Two weeks ago, Boston Celtics guard Marcus Smart announced that he had tested positive on the same day the Lakers news broke. Meanwhile, the Philadelphia 76ers announced that three members of their organization produced positive results while the Denver Nuggets had one. Neither team noted whether the positive tests included a player.

Meanwhile, Goran Dragic of the Miami Heat said Tuesday that he is prepared to forgo his annual offseason move back to his native Slovenia if that is what the NBA schedule necessitates.

Dragic, his wife and their two children are in Miami and have no plans to leave for Slovenia amid the global coronavirus pandemic. His parents recently left Miami to return home, but the Heat guard says he's staying.

"Three days ago they flew back home because they had to, the government said that all the Slovenian citizens needed to get back," Dragic said, referring to his parents, adding that they wore masks and gloves on their not-very-full flight back to Slovenia. "But my situation is different. Here is my home. We have health insurance in America and we have a home to go to, so we're going to stay here."

Dragic and his family have gotten a firsthand global view of the pandemic.

He's in Miami, and so is

his uncle—who is staying in the U.S. because he cannot get back to his native Serbia because Dragic said that country has essentially locked its borders over health concerns. Dragic's brother Zoran, a former Heat guard, was quarantined while playing in Spain, then returned to Slovenia recently and is under quarantine again, unable to leave his hotel room for a couple more weeks.

"It's a really crazy situation over there," Dragic said, detailing what his brother went through in Spain—one of the hardest-hit nations with more than 94,000 confirmed cases of the virus and more than 8,000 deaths attributed to the virus, the second-highest total worldwide behind only Italy. Slovenia has confirmed 802 cases through Tuesday, with 15 deaths.

In Miami, though, Dragic is trying to keep some sense of normalcy.

MLB vets get \$4K plus daily during virus outset



NEW YORK
(AP)—Gerrit Cole, Mike

Trout and other veteran major leaguers will receive \$4,775 per day in advance pay for the first 60 days of the season during the stoppage caused by the new coronavirus, a total of \$286,500.

That's just 2.5% percent of the \$193,548 the New York Yankees pitcher and Los Angeles Angels outfielder were scheduled to earn each day during the 186-day season from their \$36 million salaries, tied for the major league high this year.

The daily total was obtained by The Associated Press after it was confirmed by Major League Baseball and the players' association following their agreement last week on how to proceed during the stoppage.

Less veteran players receive smaller amounts specified in the agreement: \$16,500, \$30,000 or \$60,000, depending on the player's years of service.

No Wimbledon for first time since WWII

LONDON—Wimbledon looks certain to be scrapped for the first time since World War II by tournament chiefs on Wednesday as the coronavirus wreaks further havoc on the global sporting calendar.

The cancellation of the only grasscourt Grand Slam tournament at the All England Club would leave the tennis season in disarray after the French Open was controversially moved and all events cancelled until June 7.

Wimbledon, in leafy southwest London, is due to run for two weeks from June 29, with Novak Djokovic and Simona Halep set to defend their singles titles.

A decision to scrap the tournament is widely expected, with the world struggling to contain the spread of COVID-19, which has infected more than 840,000 people worldwide and killed over 40,000.

Lead-up tournaments in the short grasscourt season are also likely to be scrapped following talks on Tuesday,

ing on the contract.

MLB has delayed opening day until mid-May at the earliest, and it remains unclear when or if the season will start.

Under the terms of the deal, teams are combining to give \$170 million in advance pay to players on 40-man rosters, injured lists and outright assignments to the minor leagues. The payments will be made in equal installments on the normal payroll schedule and do not have to be repaid if the season is scrapped. They cover from March 26, the original opening day, through May 24 or whenever the season starts, whichever is earlier.

Money is being split into four classes based on contract status. Young players not yet eligible for salary arbitration have what baseball calls split contracts, with different salaries depending on whether the player is in the major leagues or in the minors. Payments to the more senior



AP
New York Yankees starting pitcher Gerrit Cole receives a new ball during a spring training baseball game against the Detroit Tigers, Thursday, March 5, 2020, in Lakeland, Fla.

Meanwhile, in order to get back on the baseball field, Nick Ahmed is willing to play as a masked man.

The two-time Gold Glove shortstop for the Arizona Diamondbacks said he's seen some pictures of recent baseball games in Asia where players have worn protective masks to shield themselves from the spread of the coronavirus.

He said the masks "wouldn't be ideal" but if it means baseball could be played, he's ready.

"I'll be up for anything at this point just to be able to play," Ahmed explained Tuesday during a video conference. "If they said, 'Hey, you can start games on May 15th or June 1st, but you have to wear masks.' If that's the only thing holding us back than sure, guys would do it."

Ahmed is at his home in Phoenix with his wife, two young sons and brother, trying to stay in shape, fighting boredom and hoping baseball can be played at some point this spring or summer.

Ahmed said players are open to just about any scenario for playing games. That includes empty ballparks, ample doubleheaders or yes, even masks.

players were determined by accounting for the less senior players, then dividing the remainder among players with so-called straight salaries—the same amount in the majors and minors.

A player receives \$275 daily

if his salary while in the minors is \$46,000 to \$91,799, a group that includes highly touted rookies such as Boston infielder Bobby Dalbec and Atlanta outfielder Cristian Pache.

Those with salaries in the minors from \$91,800 to \$149,999, a group that has signed at least their second big league contract, get \$500 daily. Those players include well-regarded rookies such as Los Angeles Dodgers infielder Gavin Lux and Tampa Bay pitcher Brendan McKay.

Players with salaries in the minors of \$150,000 or more receive \$1,000 daily, among them 2019 NL Rookie of the Year Pete Alonso of the New York Mets, 2019 AL Rookie of the Year Yordan Alvarez and 2018 AL Rookie of the Year Shohei Ohtani of the Los

Angeles Angels.

Those with single salaries get the \$4,775 a day. By agreeing to a long-term contract in January, White Sox outfielder Luis Robert moved up to that category.

Projected over a full 186-day season, the payments would work out to salaries of \$888,150, \$186,000, \$93,000 and \$51,150.

Players with straight salaries had the right to opt out of the advance payments, but none did in order to simplify the process, the players' association said Tuesday.

Illustrating the huge gap between unionized major leaguers and those with minor league contracts, MLB said Tuesday it was extending its \$400 weekly allowances through May for players with minor league deals.

champions Roger Federer, Serena Williams and Venus Williams have played at the All England Club for the final time.

Federer and Serena will be nearly 40 by the time of the 2021 championships and Venus will be 41.

Serena, beaten in last year's final by Halep, is stuck on 23 Grand Slam singles titles—agonizingly one away from equaling Margaret Court's record.

The conditions required to play on grass in England mean a postponement is impractical and a date later in the summer or early autumn would mean much shorter evenings.

"Each week that passes, you get less and less light to play the tournament," doubles specialist Jamie Murray told the BBC.

American giant John Isner, who won the longest-ever tennis match over three days at Wimbledon in 2010, said the scrapping of the tournament would be a "tough pill to swallow."



Three-time Wimbledon champion Boris Becker on Tuesday pleaded for tournament chiefs to wait longer before making a decision.

"I really hope Wimbledon will wait until the end of April for decision!" he tweeted. "The tourney is first week of July... patience is a virtue."

But former women's world number one Amelie Mauresmo, the 2006 Wimbledon champion, said the 2020 season would probably need to be scrapped.

"I think that we are going to have to draw a line under the 2020 tennis season," she tweeted.

The cancellation of Wimbledon could mean multiple

the TanHoldings Tennis Classic (500/fourth place in singles and 250/doubles).

Meanwhile, other players who made it into the boys U16 rankings are Sam Culp (550), Hyunmin Cho (350), Eugene Park (300), Andrew Chung (300), Min Sin Kim (300), Gang Min Kim (200), Anthony Gregoire (150), Jaehoon Son (150).

The rankings will help NMITA determine the players that will represent the CNMI to the 2020 North Pacific Regional Championships in Guam and the 2020 Pacific Oceania Junior Cham-

pionships in Fiji. The North Pacific event is supposed to take place in June, but has been moved to July due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The POJC, which is usually held either in July or August, has also been rescheduled and will now be played in October.

Ranking points are still at stake, as NMITA has two tournaments left (will be played depending on the development in the crisis) for the 2019-2020 calendar—the Bridge Capital Tennis Classic (only the opening week was played) and the CNMI Junior Tennis Championships.

SHIRLEY'S

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in the first half, including 9 straight late in that frame, Taracatac was held to one field goal in the second half.

With Taracatac struggling, POI Aviation looked for other options on offense, but no other players stepped up. The best that the team could get was the two field goals apiece from Anthony Dela Cruz and Jesse Kalen, while Jugos and Guiab were on target to steal the win for Shirley's.

Jugos led all scorers with his 22 points, while Guiab also finished in twin digits after contributing 12. Laxa added 8 points.

Taracatac tallied 16 points for POIC, while Isael Saito made 11, and Kalen recorded 9.

Shirley's 56—Jugos 22, Guiab 12, Laxa 8, Alonzo 5, Abella 5, Nicdao 4.

POI Aviation 54—Taracatac 16, Saito 11, Kalen 9, Dela Cruz 5, Kosam 5, Pascual 2, Mendiola 2, Yu 2, Tenepere 2.

Scoring by halves: 28-32, 56-54.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Shirley's Coffee Shop's John Jugos, seen here going for an uncontested layup during their game against D&Q in their season debut in the TanHoldings caging at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium last month, fired 22 points in their 56-54 win over POI Aviation.

CLOSE

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points for finishing fifth in the Coconut Classic.

Heo barged into the finals of the Coconut Classic event to add 750 points to the 600 he earned in the TanHoldings Classic, putting him in a tie for fourth place with Hwang. A pair of 600 ranking points (from SIS tournament and Coconut Classic) plus his 150 points in the TanHoldings Tennis Classic (third place in doubles) gave Hwang 1,350.

Kang rounded out the Top 5, as he gained 750 points in



NFL playoffs
expanded to
14 teams

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Close battle for top ranking

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Junior tennis players Andy Kim and David Kwon are neck-and-neck in the race for the top ranking in the boys U16 division.

Kim collected 2,600 rankings points from three tournaments to take the No. 1 spot, while at close second with 2,550 points is Kwon.

Kim got 1,100 ranking points from the TanHoldings Tennis Classic held in November last year, as he ruled the boys U16 singles event and made it to the semifinals of the doubles (partnering with Hyun Min Cho). He also prevailed in the boys U16 finals of the Saipan International School STUCO Tennis Tournament in January this year to gain 1,000 more points, while his Final Four stint in the Coconut Tennis Classic last February gave Kim 500 markers.

Kwon was the runner-up in the boys U16 singles event in the Coconut Classic and earned 1,000 points and his earlier No. 2 finish in the SIS-



ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Andy Kim, right, and David Kwon are in a close fight for the No. 1 spot in the boys U16 division of the CNMI Junior Tennis Rankings.

sponsored competition in the same age group handed him 750 points. Kwon also joined the TanHoldings Tennis Classic and registered 800 rankings points for placing third in the singles (600) and second in the doubles (200).

Joining Kim and Kwon in the Top 5 of the CNMI Junior Tennis Rankings for the boys U16 age group are Jun Wang (1,900), Isaac Heo (1,350), Juncheol Hwang (1,350), and

Daniel Kang (1,150).

Wang was runner-up to Kim in the TanHoldings Tennis Classic to claim 750 ranking points, plus the former got 250 for teaming up with Kang and ruling the doubles event of Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Association's season-opening competition. In the SIS tournament, Wang made it to the semis to notch 500 points, while he received 400

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Shirley's noses out POI

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Shirley's Coffee Shop eked out a 56-54 win over POI Aviation in the 2020 TanHoldings Inter-Company Basketball League at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.

The close win in the March 13 game gave Shirley's a 2-0

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Shirley's Coffee Shop's Junar Guiab, seen here barreling his way against two D&Q defenders during their season debut in the TanHoldings caging at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium last month, scored the go-ahead basket in their 56-54 win over POI Aviation.

record and a share of the lead with Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan, while POI dropped its season debut in the competition, which has been suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Before the league was halted, Shirley's managed to make a follow-up on its 54-47 triumph over D&Q Saipan by nosing out the debuting POI.

It was a come-from-behind victory for Shirley's, as the team faced a 28-32 deficit at halftime before Junar Guiab and John Jugos teamed up in the second half to hand the squad back-to-back wins. Guiab scored 7 points in the

final 20 minutes of play, including the go-ahead basket in the tough match.

Jugos, on the other hand, registered 15 markers in the final half, 9 of them came from the 3-point area. Duncan Laxa and Seth Alonzo were the two other Shirley's players who hit the board in the second half with the former adding 4 points and the latter chipping in 2.

POI Aviation lost the driver's seat in the second half and eventually the game, as Webster Taracatac slowed down on offense in the payoff period. After delivering 11 points

See SHIRLEY'S on Page 19